

Wardens, Aldermen, Liverymen, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening! And thank you Alison for those kind and thoughtful words.

It is always a little intimidating speaking after a lawyer (even when one is not being cross-examined!), but in this case she is also the Master Plaisterer, an Alderman and Sheriff-in-waiting. Alison, a list of every role you have held with the Corporation would take us well past Carriages, but suffice to say that we hugely appreciate everything you do for the Corporation. And that extends, of course, to Alderman Robert Hughes Penny.

It's also good to see so many of you from last summer's China trip with Sheriff Michael Mannelli. It was an eye-opening experience promoting the City of London and providing extraordinary insights into another culture. Being in cities from Shanghai to Beijing and witnessing their very scale made one realise just how extraordinary it is that we are currently gathered in, what remains, the financial capital of the world.

It is not easy to sit in a venue like this, in this incredible City and take London or the work of the Financial Services Group of Livery Companies for granted. But we must never fall into that trap. We are part of something incredibly special and valuable. But what makes the entire Livery experience special is less about the exquisite halls and even these wonderful outfits (!) and more about the people we share it with.

China was a perfect example of 'team bonding', each of us there to support the Lord Mayor and, in the process, build new relationships while having a huge amount of fun. I was lucky to spend time there with Margaret, the Master Arbitrator who limped around half-a-dozen Chinese cities ignoring her physio's instruction to rest! And three of my personal guests tonight; Andrew Marsden, Gus Machado and Sonny Xu who organised the entire visit.

Relationship development is not unique to overseas trips! Adele Thorpe had the brilliant idea of forming a 1920's group which, I should confirm, is unrelated to the better-known 1920 Committee! Adele's group brought-together all the Masters in advance of our serving this year, allowing us to network and share ideas and concerns. Inevitably, friendships have

grown as a result and it is excellent to be sharing this evening with Masters Baker, Firefighter and Furniture Maker, a combination that should make for a truly memorable nursery rhyme!

I also feel incredibly fortunate to be in the presence of the Master Mariner, Prime Warden Shipwright and Master Gunmaker as my idea of a perfect day begins on a shoot and moves onto the open water while the barrels are still warm! I should also point out that we are in the presence of the Master Woolman, because not only do I want to take-up my right to walk a flock of sheep over London Bridge, I actually have my own flock! So, we are in the presence of the great and the good and I have barely mentioned property yet. Which will come as something of a surprise to my colleagues and my wife!

But the Alderman is a Past Master of the Plaisterers, while Master Horner and Master Gold and Silver Wire Drawer are old friends from the property industry. Which goes to show that the best things really do come in threes! Just like the hat trick in football, the three pillars of sustainability, the Ken Follett trilogy and the three course dinner! Which, I hope you have noticed was based on the principle of healthy body healthy mind!

And on the subject of threes it is a huge pleasure to welcome Professor Malcolm Hollis and his wife Andrea. The clue is in the name (!) as he formed Malcolm Hollis in the 1970's. And having sold it in 1988 it reformed with – yes (!) – three people in 1991!

Having heard all that it will come as no surprise to you all that my focus this evening is a set of three at the very heart of the Livery. And that's our charitable work. Over the years, the various Companies in-and-around property have done outstanding philanthropic work. And I believe we are now at a stage where we can approach that work in a more joined-up way. The sector is able to identify three groups of people it is looking to help and three charities for whom we are fundraising to that end.

First and foremost is the tragedy of homeless young people. I am sure you are all aware of the outstanding work done by Land Aid to this end, finding homes and building new ones. We are in the presence of many who have slept out – in freezing conditions - to raise awareness and funds. Hundreds did just that at the Oval recently showing incredible solidarity and resilience. The message is that the property world is doing its upmost to put roofs over the heads of those who need them most.

Then there is a second group; surveyors who have fallen upon hard times. Those who qualified and took the first steps towards professional success but for whom life has not worked out as planned and who are now faced with fundamental challenges, some as serious as homelessness. Often, they have been laid low by circumstances out of their control, including failing mental health, and they are supported magnificently by the charity Lionheart whose CEO, Davina Goodchild will speak in a moment.

And then there is a third group; young people with big dreams but little means. People who are bright and hungry for work but whose futures totter in the balance. At the Worshipful Company for Chartered Surveyors they are our current focus. We want to enable them to join our profession and to fulfil their potential.

I think it is crucial we see how these three groups are linked and the role we can play, collectively, in their growth and recovery. We are at our very best when we work collaboratively and in synch. Let's work on raising each other's profiles and the very real difference we can make together.

And if there is a group in the room that can testify to the power of teamwork it is the armed services, where collaboration can mean the difference between life and death. Welcome to representatives of 135 Geo Squadron - TA Army unit 7010 RauxAF – RAF and the Newham Colwell Sea Cadets. Our thoughts are also with those on the HMS Echo who cannot be here this evening. And as luck would have it the Army, Air Force and Navy also come as a three!

Which brings me to a close. It is such an honour to be standing here, in this role, and such a privilege to be sharing our Spring Supper with you all. Thank you for taking the time and effort to be here. Please join me by raising your glasses in a toast **to our Guests!**