

MALCOLM HOPKINS, MASTER 2023-24

An Exceptional and Memorable Year



The Master Malcolm Hopkins at his Installation Dinner accompanied by his daughter Julie and consort Jean

INTRODUCTION

Having been installed as Master of one's own Livery Company in April 2023, a Coronation Year, it was truly a pinnacle to my career as an Upholsterer.

It seems incredible that I first became associated with the Upholders way back in 1990, when the first students awards were made at the London Metropolitan University (formally The London College of Furniture).

This blossomed from supporting students to a close working relationship promoting both organisations leading to myself becoming a Liveryman and beyond.

GARDEN PARTY



The Master and Consort at the Royal Garden Party

With the sad passing of our late Queen and going forward to the Coronation of King Charles III, Jean and I had the immense privilege of attending the first Royal Garden Party, post pandemic, at Buckingham Palace, of our future King on a glorious summer's day, just a few days before his Coronation.

MASTER'S WEEKEND

June brought us together for the Masters weekend, which was held in Glasgow hosted by the Trades House of Glasgow. A most enjoyable event allowing a great opportunity to meet and make friends with many other Livery Masters, while attending a number of events and dinners including visits to landmarks, museums and a Cathedral.

LONDON METROPOLITAN AWARDS

As we moved into July, I presented the annual student awards at the London Metropolitan University. This was a particularly special, personal occasion for me, as I had attended both as a student then later the lecturer in charge for over 30 years and now as a judge, to present these awards as Master, I had a personal insight in how much they had achieved and how proud they were in receiving the recognition of the Upholders Company.

MASTER'S CHARITY EVENT



Junior Warden Roger Wates at the Master's Charity Event

The Master Charity Event was a new initiative proposed by Junior Warden Roger Wates. On my behalf he with his wife Sue accompanied by many others at various stages walked the length of the Thames

from Kelmscott Manor Lechlade Gloucester to Kelmscott House in Hammersmith, some 136 miles, starting and finishing with a tour of each house and ending with afternoon tea to which cakes were supplied by the Clink Charity who train people in prison in catering and horticulture skills, who work to reduce reoffending.

THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW



The Master and Consort - and other Upholders - at the Lord Mayor's Show

SHEEP DRIVE AND WOOL FAIR



Guest celebrity chef Richard Corrigan bangs a nail into Roy Theobald's legendary nail board; the Master, Richard Corrigan and Hon Liveryman Vincent Keaveny CBE; Liveryman Marian Sinclair and her assistant from Motorcycle Funerals, Junior Warden Roger Wates, Liveryman Roy Theobald and Liveryman Kirsty Lockwood

KING'S AND MANSION HOUSE BANQUET

Our annual attendance of the Mansion House Banquet had to be postponed by one week, as arrangements had been made to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camila in recognising the work of the City of London Civic institutions, it was a true privilege to be invited and attend as the Master of the Upholders.

The following week, our Mansion House Banquet took place with many of the regular traditions that we all look forward to.

I was delighted that the Lord Mayor, now Sir Nicholas Lyons, Sheriff Alistair King, their Consorts and a number of other dignitaries were able to join us and make it quite a spectacular evening. We also

welcomed four students, two award winners and two who received bursaries. From a personal perspective I can only describe it as a special and memorable occasion.

RED CROSS CHRISTMAS FAIR



Upholders at the Red Cross Christmas Fair

Towards the end of November, once again the Upholders supported the Lord Mayor's Red Cross Christmas Fair at the Guildhall, having two stands, one full of cushions , the other being a tombola, with all the prizes being sponsored by members of the Company.

It was with great honour that I and Past Master Tim Solway were introduced to HRH The Duchess of Gloucester accompanied by the Lady Mayoress Elisabeth Mainelli.

Many were involved in making this possible both before and especially during the fair, but my grateful thanks should go to Past Master Michael Gilham and Cynthia Acorn who was the main organiser and attended every day to make this such a success and raise funds.

NATIONAL UPHOLDERS AWARDS



The Master and Senior Ward presenting Upholders Awards at the Furniture Show

In January the Upholders and the AMUSF had a stand at the Furniture Show at the NEC Birmingham, on display were a number of students who had received double distinctions for their level three course work.

Roger Wates, Senior Warden and myself judged the upholstered furniture and later in the day, I had the great pleasure in presenting the first Upholders National awards to the winning students: Miss Lola Sutherland, Miss Libby Payne, David Jolly and Beccy Holloway

CLINK BALL

February was a busy month. It started with the Clink Ball, held at the Lancaster Gate Hotel, we were able to fill two tables of ten. During the evening Roger Wates and I had great pleasure in presenting a £5,000 cheque to the Clink Charity, which was a portion of the funds raised from Roger's Thames walk. Later in the month the Upholders annual Church Service and Dinner was held where I was delighted to welcome as our guest Sheriff Dame Susan Langley as my speaker who was unable to attend the Mansion House Banquet.

Quickly followed by a trip to Litchfield, where Jean and myself were invited to the Installation of the new Master and banquet of the Worshipful Company of Smiths, where I was the guest speaker and took the opportunity to talk about the Upholders, its activities, charities and the support of education and training.

WHEELWRIGHT WEEKEND



The Master and Consort attending the Wheelwright Weekend

NEW LIVERYMEN, FREEMEN AND MASTER'S AWARD

As Master it was with great pleasure that I had the privilege of clothing seven Liverymen and three Freemen. Liverymen: Carline Deal, Marian Sinclair, Adam Grinder, Carl Irving, Anna-Maria Lloyd, Anna Smith and Manjeet Upple. Freemen Nina Walker, Tom Beavon and our very own Clerk, Rosemary Selfe. As we entered March I had the honour of attending the Master's Certificate Awards at Mansion House where Armand Verdier, Lindsay Booth, Charlotte Ellis-Brown and Rachel Ormiston. Were presented with their awards. A few days later, Jean and I attended the Lord Mayor's Dinner for all Masters and Consorts at the Mansion House. The final event of my year, organised by the Wheelwrights P.M. David Mortlock, was to be invited with others, their Consorts and guests from the Wood Group, for an organised weekend to Mike Rowland and Sons, Wheelwrights in Colyton Devon, whereupon we all took part in making a cart wheel, a great way to finish my year.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

I have been asked many times for my most memorable moments, there were so many, but the Royal Garden Party, Kings banquet, Mansion House Banquet and being part of the guard of honour for the new Lord Mayor to name but a few.

MY AIMS

My aim for the year as Master and previously as Senior Warden, was to raise the profile and promote the Company in all we do, having the opportunity to address many, such as the Worshipful Company of Smiths. Training centres, both as the external verifier and as a guest. I hope I have been successful in my year in bringing the Upholders to a more prominent position. That being said, I had the pleasure of representing the Upholders in over 120 civic and social events, and my Consort attended some 25, including lectures, Upholders lunches and several award presentations.

In the many years I have been involved with the Upholders, holding various positions both inside and outside the Company. There are so many people that I must thank in so many aspects of advice and support, Past Masters, Past Clerks and many fellow Liverymen, but I am immensely grateful to my Consort Jean and of course Rosemary our Clerk for all the hard work and support.

SUMMER EVENT



The Master and Consort with Upholders aboard Avontuur IV

In Organising the Masters Summer event, I wanted to do something a little different, so with the assistance of our Clerk Rosemary, we Organised a cruise up the river Thames. I welcomed the guests as they boarded the Avontuur IV at Westminster pier sailing towards Battersea, we were entertained as we sailed along, by a jazz band and tucked into a BBQ. While enjoying the sights and sounds of London.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the 26th Edition of Upbraid.

With our last edition reflecting on the Immediate Past Master's term from 2022-23, we now celebrate Malcolm Hopkins' year, that of our 639th Master. Some of the highlights of the calendar of events are featured in this edition. We also reflect on the passing of Liverymen - and welcome newer Liverymen to the Upholders.

We hope you enjoy looking back with Malcolm at his busy and memorable year, at the same time looking forward to Rob Ward's year to come as Master.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this Upbraid. We are already starting to prepare for our next edition, so if you have articles or ideas for inclusion then please send these to

simon.thorp@simonthorp.co.uk. As before, we will assume you give permission for your item to be edited and published unless you indicate otherwise.

Upbraid 26 will be published in digital format on our website, www.upholders.co.uk.

Simon Thorp, Liveryman, Editor of Upbraid and Webmaster

THE HONORARY CHAPLAIN

The Master requested for our Annual Service this year that the theme should be “something uplifting and joyful”. Our hymns and readings, and the wonderful music sung by the choir reflected that. In my sermon I reflected on the importance of feeling and expressing gratitude, and also the need to try to stop our minds thinking negatively.

In our currently international political climate that may seem rather difficult. If I were to spell out all that is going wrong in our world it would be a litany of horror – war, hunger, climate change... So how can we find hope, and be ‘uplifted and joyful’. The reading we had from Isaiah in our church service encouraged us to “Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.” We may not all have a religious faith, but even those who do not believe in God can find it helpful to look outside ourselves for inspiration, and in times of illness or struggle, may find that ‘God is near’, maybe in the love and care of others around us.

Those who have a Christian faith will look to Jesus as the “human face of God” as an example of how we can live our lives better, and give hope and encouragement to others. In the current season of Lent, many of us may try to give something up, make more time for prayer and reflection. Lent lasts just over 40 days, remembering the time that the Gospels tells us Jesus was in the wilderness, resisting temptation, and preparing himself for his three years of ministry. For us it is a time for preparation for Good Friday and Easter when we remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. Looking ahead to that is what gives us hope, that however dark the days may seem, there is light at the end when evil is overcome by good.

Our second reading at the Annual Service was from Romans chapter 12 ending with these words: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” In the face of what seems to be so much evil in our world today, may we all try each day to do something to bring light into the darkness – even the smallest act of kindness is good.

Canon Caroline Clarke, Hon Chaplain

CLERK’S CHATTER

2023 - a new Master and the crowning of a new Monarch, King Charles III, and Queen Camilla. The year has flown by and it has been a busy year for the Master and for the Company.

The Company contributed to the anointing screen used at the Coronation, a beautiful screen embroidered by the Royal School of Needlework, a tree design including names of Commonwealth nations, with poles made from trees from the Windsor Castle estate. The year also included the return

of Buckingham Palace Garden Parties following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Master and Consort both attended.

The Charity Committee launched the Master's Charity Event and a total of £20,000 was raised in support of the Company's charity giving particularly to the Fowlds Bursary Fund, Fine Cell Work and The Clink.

The Master invited four award winning upholstery students to the Company's banquet, in the presence of the Lord Mayor, in October at Mansion House, a very special occasion for them and a wonderful way to showcase our young upholsterers to the Company.

The Master continued throughout the year to represent the Company at a great many events and his Consort too threw herself into her City Consorts Year Group.

Rosemary Selfe, Clerk

THE IMMEDIATE PAST MASTER

With much of the disruption caused by Covid and train strikes mainly in the past, Malcolm was able to plan his term as Master with confidence.

Throughout the year he continued to build on the work on corporate governance established by Anthony Demby and supported the Funeral Directors' Initiative begun by Immediate Past Master, Jackie Williams. At Common Hall Malcolm highlighted that his aim was to promote the Company and its aims and objectives. During the year he worked tirelessly to do this by reaching out to the wider livery and our trades, and by inviting a wider range of guests to our formal dinners. He also invited some of our prize winners to attend some of our dinners, so that they could gain a better understanding of the Livery.

Of course, the year involved lots of formal dinners, both those of the Upholders and other Livery companies, as well as lectures and church services where he was a great ambassador for the Company.

The aim of any Master is to leave the Company just that little bit better than it was passed over. I think there is little doubt that Malcolm was able to do that, setting up a good future for the Company.

Jackie Williams, Master 2022-23

EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE: THE FORTHCOMING YEAR AS MASTER

As I step into the role of Master for the forthcoming year, I am filled with a profound sense of honour and responsibility. This new chapter is not just a personal milestone but a collective journey that I embark upon with the unwavering support of my esteemed colleagues and the wider community.

The role of Master represents a unique blend of tradition and innovation. It is an opportunity to uphold the timeless values and principles that have shaped our Livery while also steering us towards new horizons.

One of my primary goals is to raise the profile of the Upholders with the wider public as I think that our role in conservation and repurposing furniture deserves to be recognized as something that we have been doing for hundreds of years and is not just a reaction to the modern imperative of sustainability.

We will continue to develop our relationship with the Funeral Directors as well as using our position as an open company to engage with all who would share our values, to increase our membership and diversity.

In the spirit of transparency and open communication, I intend to engage regularly with the community through various forums and initiatives. By fostering an open dialogue, we can address challenges proactively and celebrate our successes collectively. It is my belief that a well-informed and engaged community is the bedrock of a thriving institution.

As we navigate the forthcoming year together, I am confident that our collective efforts will lead to remarkable achievements. With a shared vision and unwavering commitment, we will continue to build upon our legacy of excellence, creating a brighter and more prosperous future for all.

Let us embrace this journey with enthusiasm and determination.

Rob Ward, Master Elect

HISTORY SOCIETY

Walk from Trafalgar Square to the West End

We joined the current Master, Malcolm Hopkins, and Past Master Jackie Williams on a walk from Trafalgar Square to Mayfair, arranged by the History Society.

The guided walk was led by John Kay Steel who has taken us on a number of walks. It was the little details of this tour that made it so interesting. He told how the troublemakers in Trafalgar Square were locked up in a small cage under one of the lights in the square and then taken out to the local police station. I have been to Trafalgar Square so many times in the past, but I have never noticed it.



We moved on to the famous Oceanic House which was the London headquarters of the White Star Line, presently the Canadian Embassy. This of course is where many people streamed the roads 111 years ago when the Titanic sank leaving people wondering what had happened to their loved ones.

As we strolled down Pall Mall, we saw some beautiful buildings and statues, one building of course was The Old Travellers Club established in 1819.

It is one of the oldest gentlemen's clubs still in existence in London.

Travelling up St James Street we went down a very dark and narrow alleyway which led to a quaint little square in Pickering Place. It is known as the smallest public square



Pickering Place, London's smallest Square

in London. We spent a few moments in the square and then headed back onto the Street walking up to see James J Fox cigar merchant and the Russian diamond workshop, Wartski, where the wedding rings were made for Prince William and Katherine Middleton.

We then passed two more gentleman's clubs, Boodles and Brooks. Brooks is the more exclusive of the two. King Charles is a member. It was nice to admire both the buildings on the opposite sides of the road, and a chance to stop and catch a breath. It was hard work walking up the hill towards Piccadilly.

Walking through Shepherd's Market and into Mayfair was lovely. The area is named Mayfair because there used to be a big fair there every year in the first two weeks of May. There were so many interesting things to see on this walk, and it really made me think about how I've passed many of these buildings and never known their true significance in history.

We sadly ran out of time to see the most haunted house in London. The walk finished at the Punch Bowl Pub, whose previous owners were Madonna and Guy Ritchie, where we had a well deserved drink and a lovely, albeit rather later than expected, dinner.

If another walking tour is organised, I recommend you participate and put on your most comfortable walking shoes. It was highly enjoyable, and I would definitely do it again.

Jackie Williams

KELMSCOTT HOUSE



A tour of Kelmscott House, was organised to celebrate the end of Roger Wates' charity walk from Kelmscott Manor in Oxfordshire to the House in London. After welcoming Roger back to London, 28 Upholders and their guests enjoyed a tour of the house, followed by a delicious afternoon tea.

William Morris lived in the House from 1878 until his death in 1896. Today, it houses the William Morris Museum. The House, and many artefacts relating to William Morris, were donated to the William Morris Society in 1972 by Marian Helena Stephenson who, with her husband, purchased the House in 1926.

Jackie Williams

CHURCH CRAWL

On 13th September 2023, a select band of happy pilgrims from the Upholders joined Fr Luke as he swapped his Archdeacon's chasuble for clothing more suited to our guided early evening walk. Luke proved to be a mine of information about the City as we strolled along, and he had also arranged for colleagues with a more in-depth knowledge of their individual churches to provide fascinating insights into the history and current working of St Clement's Eastcheap, St Mary Abchurch, and St Stephen Walbrook. Sadly St Mary-le-Bow was hosting an event, so we were only able to get a glimpse inside Cockney Central; but we were allowed into the crypt: a hidden medieval gem. Our perambulation culminated in a tour of the newly refurbished church of St Andrew's by the Wardrobe.

The evening was rounded off with a splendid buffet supper kindly hosted by Luke at his home in St Andrew's Rectory, ensuring a convivial and memorable event for all of us.

Steve Gardner

TOUR OF THE GUILDHALL



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In March 2024, 13 Upholders and guests, participated in a guided tour of the Guildhall led by Murray Craig. The original part of the building dates from the 15th century. It is the ceremonial and administrative centre for the City of London and its Corporation. During the tour we saw the plaque which details the important trials held in the Hall, including those of Anne Askew, the Protestant martyr, Thomas Cranmer and Lady Jane Grey amongst others. We also observed the statues of William Pitt the Elder, William Pitt the younger and Sir Winston Churchill, and the monuments to Nelson, Wellington. Other interesting sights included the brass "standard of length" which showed the official length for 1 foot, two feet and a yard, the stained glass windows portraying the Lord Mayor's of London and the banners of the 111 Livery companies.

Following the tour the group adjourned to a local restaurant for some much-needed sustenance.

Jackie Williams

WELCOME TO NEWER LIVERYMEN

Marian Sinclair



Motorcycle Funerals was founded by my late husband, Paul. The business was his baby, while I was there supporting in the background. When he died from a brain tumour in 2019, I had no doubt in my mind that I wanted to continue. I could not let all Paul's hard work go in vain. I took over just weeks after my loss and resumed work as usual for the families that needed us.

I am not what is generally expected when people think of 'a funeral person'. For me, every day is a learning experience. I travel a lot, visiting exhibitions, conferences and funeral directors around the UK, introducing myself and Motorcycle Funerals to them.

Paul and I were married for over 18 years, and Motorcycle Funerals was at the very centre of us working together in, and for the community. He left me with a legacy that I cherish every single day.

Carline Deal



Carline Deal began her military career whilst studying psychology at university; initially in the Army National Guard as a Specialist field paramedic assigned to mobile medical units. Her enlistment culminated in active duty service within G-3 Operations and planning, and overseas deployments with

the Joint Military Commission during the US and UK peacekeeping missions at the time of the Balkans conflict (Bosnia Herzegovina 1998 - 2001).

After receiving an Honourable Discharge from service, she revisited her studies and completed her BA in Business Management (Hons) and worked in the fields of corporate asset management and private banking. Following on from the instability of the 2007 financial crash, she returned to her passion of health, neuroscience, research and development and became an entrepreneur. As Managing Director of a med-tech firm, her company works in collaboration with universities, engineers and private hospitals developing rehabilitation tools and devices for the benefit of human longevity and wellbeing.

Her hobbies include scuba diving, tennis and travelling. She holds dual citizenship (US & UK), is a member of the UK Research Institute (UKRI), a Board Director with British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC) and volunteers with Bromley based British Veterans association that advocates for veterans health and opportunities across all branches of service (RAF, Army, Navy, Marines, SF).

She was introduced to the Worshipful Company of the Upholders as a member's guest at a luncheon and met with members of the AMUSF. The Company's incredible legacy and camaraderie shared amongst members demonstrated the warmth and inviting spirit that has made her membership. She was sponsored by Michael Tickner and Steve Gardner and clothed into the Company as a Liveryman in May 2023.

Anna Smith



I have worked in Textiles most of my life. I studied Production Engineering with Management at Nottingham University with a scholarship with Courtaulds which included work placements in textile factories in the UK and overseas. I've been the Managing Director of John Boyd Textiles for 30 years and owner for nearly 20 years. We weave horsehair fabric in Castle Cary Somerset since 1837 and still use the original patented looms from 1870. It's a historic fabric used mainly for upholstery and upholstered wall panels, we are one of the last companies weaving this fabric. I take a great interest in Textiles, Art, Historic Buildings and Interiors, Industrial Heritage and enjoy traveling and walking preferably by the coast.

I would like to thank Past Master Malcolm Hopkins and Senior Warden Roger Wates for sponsoring me to join the Worshipful Company of Upholders and look forward to meeting more members and learning more about the Upholders and traditions of the Livery Companies and the City of London. I

am very much enjoying being a Liveryman and regard it as a great honour.

Adam Ginder DL MSc BA (hons), Funeral Director



Adam began his professional career working in the hospitality industry which provided a steep learning curve in the importance of customer service and commitment. Adam read Business at Coventry, followed by Management at the University of Bristol.

In 2011, following his father's sudden death, Adam took on the responsibilities of running the family Funeral Director business, alongside his brother Daniel. During his tenure as Managing Director, Adam has served as President of the London Association of Funeral Directors, Chairman of SAIFCharter, and is currently serving on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Funeral Directors. He is also a Non-Executive Director at Golden Charter serving on the board since 2019.

In 2024, Adam received his commission and was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Hertfordshire.

Adam is a Trustee for two Hertfordshire-based charities, serves on the Committee of the Hertfordshire Lord's Taverners, and is a Freemason in London. In his spare time, he enjoys golf and travel.

Adam was introduced to the Worshipful Company of Upholders through Court Assistant Paul King, a fellow funeral director, and is working with Paul to grow the awareness of the Upholders through his profession and encourage others to join.

Carl Irving



After finishing my apprenticeship at a small company based in Oswaldtwistle Lancashire, I decided to

return to Burnley College full-time and complete an Advanced Craft Certificate in Furniture. After completing an Honours degree in 1995, teaching and training became a natural progression which led to achieving a master's degree in 2015. In the last two years I have took over the role as training director for the AMUSF which was kindly stewarded by Wendy Shorter-Blake MBE

Wendy also sponsored me to be an Upholder. I am grateful for her support and recommendation. Since taking over there have been many changes and we are set to move forward with hope to help meet the demand of an industry needing skills in the workplace.

Anne-Marie Lloyd



I came to a career in upholstery after 10 years working in the music business in recording studios. I studied at City Poly as it was then, with Malcolm Hopkins and then Alan Kirk, before working for several years as the technician for the upholstery courses. During and after a spell of part time teaching on the City and Guilds upholstery courses, I set up Bruce Upholstery at first in Clapham and then in Streatham where the business has been based since 1996.

On meeting my business partner and now husband, Roger Lloyd, the business expanded to take in his skill as a polisher and restorer. We work on traditional and modern furniture with a special interest in iconic Mid-Century pieces designed in Denmark and British designers working after the war. I would like to thank Roger Wates and Malcolm Hopkins for being my Sponsors.

OBITUARY

Peter Enefer Braxton, May 1930–January 2024

Our long-standing Liveryman, Peter Braxton, died on 30 January 2024. Peter joined the Upholders' in March 1972 and became a regular face at our events until he moved to Vienna. His two sons, James and Nicholas, became Liverymen in January 1999. James is seen regularly on television in various antique programmes.

Peter was born in May 1930 and helped Lord Dewer build up his brand of whisky. Peter was

evacuated to Somerset during the war and his father was commissioned by the Government to purchase land for an oil pipe-line to supply ships for D-Day. On one occasion, Peter, with his parents, was staying in an hotel in Bath when it was bombed and the whole family were left on the pavement near the hotel wearing just their pyjamas! They immediately jumped into their car and drove home!

Peter joined the Navy at the age of 13 as a midshipman. He served for 27 years. He started building up his pension at 13 and it was still paying out until the day he died! Peter served on HMS Belfast and HMS Ark Royal.

Peter met his father-in-law before meeting his future wife. He was first married on HMS Raleigh at Portsmouth. After the Navy, he joined the family estate agent business but he never sold a house – too busy developing and growing the business.

His wife sadly died in 1985 at the age of 47. Peter loved travelling and skiing and it was while skiing that he met his second wife. They lived in Vienna for many years.

Family to Peter was everything and he was loved by all. His Filofax, which went everywhere with him, was filled with many family stories. His family history!

Past Master Christopher Hayman

IN PRAISE OF FLOCK BEDS

One of our Company's past and most accomplished Archivists John Houston wrote a comprehensive account of our history. Published in 1993 its title Featherbedds and Flock Bedds is synonymous with our Company, describing key elements of one of our trades and giving the name to the Upholders Flock and Feather craft show and charity auction event held in the City.

Flock beds and feather beds were highlighted as key products of the Upholders craft. Both were constructed from excellent organic materials (as certified by our Company) and together with straw palliasses comprised the foundation of a sleep hierarchy in the UK for centuries.

The advent of the industrial age brought with it the sprung mattress – in various guises, evolving into pocket springs and other forms of mechanical



sophistication. Ever more creative and expensive commercial innovations followed, including the water bed (if the floor was strong enough to take the weight), then the foam and memory foam mattress and ultimately hybrid versions combining elements of several technologies.

You will most likely have had both the fortune and ill fortune to experience a variety of different beds and mattress technologies over the years. A good bed is a blessing and a sound night's sleep sets us up for the next day; conversely an uncomfortable and sleepless eight hours spent trying to relax on a sloping, lumpy, or cloying mass of unsupportive sticky foam is unbearable.

Which brings us back to our roots and purpose; what is the best sleeping surface, are we being seduced into bed by false promises, using modern production techniques that produce worse results both in performance and in terms of sustainability? A foam or sprung mattress consumes large amounts of energy in its production and is bulky and toxic in disposal.

But we may already have the solution, one which society has lost, since it does not accord with the commercial interests of modern bed manufacturers. After years of suffering plastic bread, produced using the Chorley Wood process, our tastes have rebelled; is there the potential for the equivalent of a sourdough revolution in the bed market?

One third of my nights each year are spent sleeping in an ancient farmhouse in the South of France. Summer evenings can be warm, maybe in the high 20's centigrade, winter nights are colder than the UK, -10 to -15 is possible, since the house is located high up.



Recent renovations at the farm have resulted in the need for a new bed, so whilst driving through a remote valley locally it was interesting, but unexpected, to come across a small artisanal bed factory. Au Fil de Laine was founded in 1896.

<https://www.aufildelaine.com/>

Reminiscent of an old mill building in a Lancashire or Stroud valley in the early 19th century, the traditional site employs a handful of staff and harnesses the efforts of a local flock of sheep.

The production process is simple, using tried and tested tools little changed in over a century, to produce beautifully crafted, hand built beds and mattresses. The mattresses are hypoallergenic, being composed entirely of a deep buttoned wool interior encased



in a cotton ticking. This is not the place to dwell on the production details, suffice it to say that the wool is washed, then textured with combs to produce a soft, light but

resilient filling. Further information can be found in a short video here:

<https://youtu.be/I1ksNrCTGVI?feature=shared>

But the real proof is in the performance; having purchased an all wool mattress, with the benefit of a year's testing, how does it compare to a modern divan? This assessment should be prefaced by stating the mattress was purchased together with a matching base unit, which is firm and conventionally sprung.

In short – it's fabulous! The natural qualities of the wool result in an excellent supportive surface, with a comfortable temperature at all times – warm and cosy in winter, but cool in summer.

So, as the guardians of our capital city's sleeping arrangements, we should encourage the revival and patronage of our ancient art. Flock beds are the future, no internal springing or foam is required. They are good for agriculture, sheep, the environment and above all provide the best night's sleep you can imagine. Sweet dreams!

Past Master Julian Squire

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS 2023-24



Master - Mr Malcolm Hopkins FAMU
Senior Warden - Rob Ward
Junior Warden - Roger Wates
Warden to the Trade - Roger Wates
Clerk - Mrs Rosemary Selfe
Father of the Company - G Trevor
Almoner - Rob Ward
Chaplain - Revd Canon Caroline Clarke

Committees and Chairs 2023-24. **Charity** - C Hayman, **Finance** - Hon Treasurer - M Tang, **Investment** - A Lofts, **Marketing and Communication** - R Ward, **Master and Wardens** - Master, **Membership** - Mrs J Williams, **Past Masters** - C Hayman, **Trade and Education** - **Warden to the Trade** - R Wates

History Society - Mrs J Williams

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MASTER AND COURT 2024-25



Photo: Jam Pond Photography

Master - Rob Ward
 Senior Warden - Roger Wates
 Junior Warden - Stephen Tanner

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024-25

Date	Event	Attendance	Date	Event	Attendance	Date	Event	Attendance
Wednesday 17 April 2024	Installation Banquet Apothecaries' Hall	Livermen, Freemen & Guests	Monday 23 September 2024	New Members' Evening East India Club	New Livermen & Freemen please support this event	Thursday 16 January 2025	January Court, Common Hall & Dinner Watermen's Hall	Livermen & Guests, Freemen
Wednesday 15 May 2024	History Society Visit to Hatfield House	Livermen, Freemen & Yeomen	Wednesday 25 September 2024	History Society Visit to the Brand Museum	Livermen, Freemen & Guests	Wednesday 19 February 2025	Church Service St Michael's, Cornhill; Dinner at Armourers' Hall	Livermen, Freemen & Guests
Monday 24 June 2024	Election of Sheriffs Guildhall followed by Lunch	Livermen only to vote, Livermen & Guests lunch	Sunday 29 September 2024	Sheep Drive & Livery Fair Southwark Bridge	Public Event	Wednesday 19 March 2025	Master's Court Dinner Oriental Club	Court & Consorts/ Partners only
Wednesday 26 June 2024	Audit Court & Dinner Guildhall	Court only	Monday 30 September 2024	Election of Lord Mayor Guildhall followed by Lunch	Livermen only to vote, Livermen & Guests lunch	Friday 28 March 2025	United Guilds' Service St Paul's followed by Lunch	Livermen & Consorts
Thursday 4 July 2024	Livery Prize Presentation London Metropolitan University	Livermen & Freemen please support this event	Tuesday 22 October 2024	Upholders' Banquet Mansion House	Livermen & Guests, Freemen	Tuesday 8 April 2025	Installation Banquet Cutlers' Hall	Livermen, Freemen & Guests
Thursday 11 July 2024	Master's Summer Event The Globe Theatre	Livermen, Freemen, Yeomen & Guests	Saturday 9 November 2024	Lord Mayor's Show	Public event	<div>Upholder Events</div> <div>City Events</div> <p>Any alterations will be given in the Members' area of the website</p>		
Wednesday 18 September 2024	September Court Dinner Barber Surgeons' Hall	Livermen, Freemen & Guests						



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