



Installation Speech
11 December 2015

Master: Gwenllian Rhys

Wardens, Sherrif, members of the Court and Livery, Ladies and Gentlemen.

At the Court Meeting held this afternoon, two new Freemen were admitted to the Company. They are David Wilkinson, and The Reverend Nicholas Gandy OGS. Please will you both stand.

David joined the family business, Wilkinson, in 1974, and purchased it from his father nearly 10 years later. The company holds a Royal Warrant and specializes in the manufacture, cleaning and repair of 18th and 19th century chandeliers.

Nicholas is the parish priest in Brackley, South Northamptonshire but he's very much a London boy having spent his childhood in Islington. Prior to entering the priesthood was a research microbiologist and teacher.

The Company has long been associated with the Royal Navy and we are delighted that our latest submarine, Artful, is now in the water.

Each year, it is customary for us to present a Glass Tankard to a member of the crew whose service has made a significant contribution to the boat.

This year's recipient, is Chief Petty Officer (Weapons Engineer Submarines) Peter Cox, Sensors Group Chief

His articulate and professional manner mark him out from his peers. This, coupled with his enthusiasm and determination to do the best job possible for HMS Artful's Weapons Engineering Department, have seen his efforts rewarded with promotion to Warrant Officer in October 2014.

And finally, I would like to thank the Immediate Past Master, Alderman Sheriff Dr Andrew Parmley for his leadership during our 350th year.

Andrew's connection with the Company started as organist in our City Church, St James Garlickhythe, some 30 years ago, and we're delighted that of the Company's 4 sheriffs, Andrew is our first Aldermanic Sheriff.

He's given us a splendid year about which you'll hear a little more later on and we wish him and his wife, Wendy, well for the remaining 9 months of their Shrieval year in the Old Bailey.

Andrew, I did suggest that the Company gift you this Ten Gallon Hat to mark your becoming Sheriff, but not, I suspect, for the last time, I was over-ruled!

It is therefore with much pleasure that I present you, on behalf of the Livery, A Laguna decanter engraved with the Company's coat of arms by Honorary Liveryman Admiral Frank Grenier.

Wardens, Sherrif, members of the Court and Livery, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, I want to thank the Court of the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers for giving me the opportunity to serve the Company as Master for the next 12 months and to thank all of you for helping to make this evening truly memorable.

This has been a special year for the Glass Sellers. Not only have we had an inspiring Master in Alderman and now Sheriff Andrew Parmley, we also celebrated 350 years as a Company.

To mark the occasion, we attended a service at St Paul's Cathedral followed by a (very boozy) Reception at Guildhall and took a float in the Lord Mayor's Show.

We held a Court Lunch on the actual anniversary day and published an updated version of the Company's History which I'm abridging and sharing on Twitter every week as Saturday Snippets. To learn more about the Company's historical highlights and, it has to be said, lowlights - as well as what we're doing today, simply follow @GlassSeller.

In essence, then, it's been 12 months of reflection, of looking back.

However, those who know me well know that I'm a forward looking kind of gal.

I've spent my working life challenging the status quo, encouraging organisations and individuals to push boundaries and break new ground.

And, as Alistair has said, I'm also someone who reaches out and gathers around me a wide range of people.

In planning my year, I wanted a theme - something on which to focus my thoughts and activities - and I've chosen INNOVATE | COMMUNICATE.

The topic of our 2015 Ravenscroft Lecture will be **The Cutting Edge of Glass: Shaping the Future**. Delivered by Rob Ireson, of Glass Technology Services Ltd (part of The British Glass Manufacturers Confederation) we'll discover more about some of the extra-ordinary uses of glass - from toothpaste and cosmetics to 3-D printing and medical devices).

Our June Church Service and Dinner will emphasise our Charitable activities. The Hon Chaplain, Philip Need, has shared with me some very innovative fund-raising ideas – so be prepared to sponsor the sermon, hymns, readings and music.

These days, there are many demands on everyone's disposable income and I know how important it is to communicate the outcomes and impact of charitable giving. Our Guest Speakers on the evening will be the beneficiaries of our charitable activities and in particular young people. Hearing the benefits right from the horse's mouth, as it were, is incredibly powerful.

It's customary for the Master to present a gift to everyone attending our Annual Mansion House Banquet and with the help of Liveryman and Glass Collector, Mark Holford, I have prepared a Competition for the design and production of these gifts in 2015. Details will go out to Glass Artists in the New Year and we hope to attract designs with a WOW factor. A panel of expert Judges will assess the entries and we'll announce the successful design at the Glass Biennale in Stourbridge in May.

It's also customary for the Master to arrange a "Jolly" – a trip for Liverymen, spouses and partners. This year, rather than one Jolly, I'm organizing a few Jollies. These will include informal evening gatherings as well as daytime events. They will take place in London and elsewhere, will involve a range of activities and will be open to all members of the Company and guests.

I'm moving our November Sunday Church Service and Lunch to a Friends & Family Friday Church Service and Lunch in July in the hope that the warmer, lighter days will encourage more of our older members

to join us and that a weekday event will encourage those working in the City to drop in with friends and colleagues.

With the exception of this evening's Guest Speaker, the speakers at our March and September Dinners and our Annual Mansion House Banquet in October are women. They are, in order of appearance: Sue O'Brien, OBE, CEO of international executive search consultants, Norman Broadbent; Alderman Fiona Woolf CBE, and Angela Knight CBE, Chief Executive of Energy UK.

Like many Livery Companies our biggest challenge is recruiting new and younger women and men to become members. I recall Past Master Brian Rawles telling me that he had a "secret target" for the number of female liverymen he wished to join the Company and I do believe that his target has not only been met but exceeded.

I'm taking a leaf out of Brian's book and have a "secret target" for the recruitment of younger members.

They don't need to progress rapidly from Freemen to Liverymen but we need to harness their energy, their innovation, their inspiration and provide them with opportunities to fulfill their aspirations.

Sitting with me at the Top Table is my Apprentice, Mark Atkins, or Sparkie as he's better known.

It's Sparkie, 21 next week, and his contemporaries who will, in the next 50 years, take this Company forward to celebrate its 400th Anniversary.

It's my hope that this won't be the first and only time Sparkie is at the top table. Who knows, next time, he might just be sitting in this very chair - as Master.

In order to attract younger members, we need to ensure that people of Sparkie's generation experience the Company as something vibrant and relevant.

Through my day job I meet many young professionals in their 20s and 30s. They are smart, they have ambition, they have a sense of giving back and paying forward and I believe many of them would enjoy being

part of an organisation whose future is built on the traditions of centuries and whose endeavours include a strong charitable element.

How to encourage young people to join Livery Companies was the subject of a question raised at the recent Masters and Clerks Briefing held by the Lord Mayor at Mansion House. I have some ideas, as do Liveryman Ron Brinkley and the Master Marketor. I think it's time for me to gather together some people push out the boundaries and get recruiting!

Being the Master Glass Seller, is an enormous privilege. Representing the Company within the City and beyond will undoubtedly open up opportunities for both me and the Company.

Moreover, knowing I have the support of the Mistress, the Prime Warden, the Master's Assistant and all the members of the Court and Company will enable me to commit myself to being Master with all the vim and vigour I can muster.

It simply leaves me, therefore, to ask you all to be upstanding and toast that most wonderful of materials - GLASS.