



Court and Livery Dinner Speech  
11 June 2015

Master: Gwenllian Rhys

Wardens, Sheriff, members of the Court and Livery, visiting Masters, Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening and a very warm welcome to tonight's Dinner.

At the Court Meeting held this afternoon Katharine Coleman MBE was admitted to the Company as an Honorary Freeman and my former Apprentice, Mark (better known as Sparkie) Atkins was admitted as a Freeman. Will you both please stand.

Katharine is a glass engraver of international repute. She is a former winner of the Glass Sellers' Art & Craft Award and, of course, she engraved our magnificent "Salt" gifted to the Company by Past Master Michael Nathan and his wife Jenny to commemorate our 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Sparkie has just completed his final year at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester where he was one of the Directors of the Students' Union and the Overseas Student Representative. He eagerly awaits the results of his degree later this month and has great ambitions for his future as an agriculturist.

In addition De Bradshaw, Tom Grant and David Wilkinson were clothed with the Livery and I'm delighted to present each with the livery badge of the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers.

I would like to take a moment to point out the symbolism contained in the Livery badge which should be worn on the right breast or lapel and I hope you will wear it on all City occasions and at any other time when you think the name and fame of the Company would benefit.

The badge itself bears the coat of the arms awarded by the College of Arms in 2009. The shield in the centre bears the three items that have been on the Company shield since the 17th Century: a stone vessel; a Venetian glass, and a looking-glass or mirror.

Flanking the shield are two Ravens representing the Company's connection with George Ravenscroft, who developed Lead Crystal. The

Ravens find footing on the Sun representing enlightenment, and the Globe symbolising the global markets for all glass products.

The Flames on the Crest rise out of a furnace to represent the heat essential to making glass for any application.

The motto is "Discordia Frangimur" which may be translated as "we will be broken by discord".

I trust that you will wear the Livery to your credit and to the credit and advantage of the Company for many years to come.

## FIRST COURSE INTERLUDE

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

Members of the Livery know that the theme for my year as Master is Innovate|Communicate so it will come as no surprise to discover that I'm introducing something a little different at this Dinner – an intercourse presentation.

An important element of any Livery Company is its Charitable activities and hearing directly from beneficiaries – particularly younger ones - the value they gain, brings charitable giving alive.

In 1875 and to commemorate his year as Master, John Abbott gifted a sum of money in the name of Edwin Abbott, a former Head Teacher of the City of London Boys School, for Scholarships to the value of £50 per year for up to 4 years for boys studying alternatively Classics or Mathematics at Oxford or Cambridge University.

Today, the Charity selects annually 2 boys as its Abbott Scholars who from this year will each receive £500 per year.

So, before we serve the main course, I'd like to invite Cumar Vasudeva, who, together with his twin brother Logan, were our 2012 Abbott Scholars, to tell you how he's benefitted from our Charity's support.

## CLOSING ADDRESS

Thank you Sir Tony for a fascinating and insightful look into the history of the Glass Sellers Company which I hope you'll give us permission to publish on our website.

In fact I'm surprised that with this in-depth level of knowledge, you're not a Glass Seller already.

I can see I shall have to instruct (for the uninitiated that's Master speak for "ask") the Clerk to send you membership forms.

In the meantime please accept this gift of hand-crafted glass made by Emma Mackintosh one of the Finalists of my Glass Commission Competition who was also selected to exhibit at the 2015 Glass Biennale

I'd like first of all to say a big "thank you" to Caroline Gillett who by playing the piano this evening gave our hard-working Sheriff the night off from musical duties.

We're all going to be seeing and hearing a lot more of Caroline because I'm delighted to say she's accepted the position of Clerk to the Company and will take over from Past Master Vincent Emms who stepped up to the plate when we needed a volunteer 4 years ago.

In true Livery tradition, Caroline, we wish you a hearty welcome.

I am now half way through my year as Master – how time flies when you're enjoying yourself!

Last weekend, the Mistress and Renter Warden, Peter, and I spent the weekend at Ironbridge for the annual Masters' pilgrimage.

"I'm looking forward to seeing you at our Court Dinner next week", I said to one Master who I could tell from his somewhat dazed and confused look was mentally scanning his diary (Don't worry I'm not going to name and shame).

“It’s OK,” I said, “I’m sure your Clerk will remind you. It all becomes a bit of a blur after a while.”

In the three months to the end of June I shall have represented the Company on 50 occasions, been entertained by 15 Livery Companies, attended 6 Lectures, travelled some 8500 miles and dare not calculate the number of glasses of wine and calories consumed.

But, to echo the words of the Lord Mayor, Alderman Alan Yarrow, it’s been the BEST year of my Livery lifetime.

And speaking of Lord Mayors, I’m delighted to be able to let you all know that our Immediate Past Master and current Sheriff, Alderman Dr Andrew Parmley, is the preferred candidate for the position of Lord Mayor for the year November 2016-17. This news is, of course, subject to Election but nevertheless as a Company we couldn’t be prouder at the prospect of having our first Lord Mayor or more excited about putting together a memorable float at the Lord Mayor’s Show next November. Many congratulations, Andrew.

I’m unofficially calling this evening the Charity Dinner and as well as inviting Cumar Vasudeva to speak, I also approached several young Glass Artists to talk about the benefit of our Art & Craft Award but unfortunately they are all on overseas trips – reaping the fruits of our support, I hope.

However, I recently attended a Lecture given by Colin Reid at the International Glass Biennale in Stourbridge. Colin, who has twice won our £5000 prize, had taken time to contact and discover from other winners what winning the Award had meant to them and spoke about the value of the Awards for both established and student artists alike.

It enabled one artist to “break through the glass ceiling”; another to triple his prices; enabled one to be taken seriously by galleries and another to set up his own studio whilst several used the money for

personal and/or professional development - to experiment with materials and techniques or to purchase expensive equipment or attend masterclasses.

The Glass Sellers Charity fund donates over £50,000 annually to causes relating to the wider glass industry, The City and its specific appeals, Education including our Glass in Society programme that specifically supports the STEM curriculum, and the less privileged in and around the City of London.

One of our City beneficiaries is the Sheriffs and Recorders Fund for which Sheriff Parmley is about to don a lycra suit and become our very own Sir Bradley Wiggins. Together with Sheriff Adler he is raising money by tandem bike riding through the City on 28 July. Now that's something I mustn't miss.

Livery Guests might be interested to know that Livery Companies as a whole donate over £40million to good causes each year and that this year's Lord Mayor, has centred his charitable Appeal on the premise of "creating wealth, giving time and supporting people".

Those of you in business in the Square Mile might want to be part of this year's City Giving Day on 30 September. Launched by Alderman Dame Fiona Woolf during her year as Lord Mayor, this year the Day gives businesses an opportunity to make a Donation, Promote and Celebrate its Charity and Community Work or Hold a Fundraiser.

Last year, one of my own members of staff abseiled Lloyd's and raised £1000 for the Appeal. I haven't quite decided what I'm going to volunteer her to do this year but it will definitely be closer to ground level.

**MY** next adventure as Master is also a charitable one. At the request of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress I'm being Jailed in the Tower of London next Friday and my Bail has been set at £1000.

I shall be arrested by the City Police at Mansion House on what I am assured is a minor misdemeanour - I have a feeling I might be accused of being a "Madame".

I, and my fellow arrested Masters, will be transported to the Tower where we shall be put on water rations (courtesy of Pol Roger – so I'm expecting something sparkling) and where we shall remain until our Bail is paid.

So, if you want to see me again, please visit my Virgin Money Giving FORWARD SLASH Master Glass Seller web page and donate – and if you don't want to see me again – visit the Renter Warden's page and donate to keep me in! I have a feeling his page is doing better than mine.

My Bail will go to the British Red Cross so please give generously - I've still a couple of hundred pounds left to raise!

Finally, and by way of Parish Notices – our up-coming events include our Friends and Family Friday Church Service and Lunch on 24 July, our Glass Dinner on 24 September with Guest Speaker Alderman Dame Fiona Woolf and our Annual Mansion House Banquet on 12 October with Guest Speaker Angela Knight CBE, when everyone will receive a piece of glass individually made by the Winner of my Master's Glass Commission Competition who will be announced at our September dinner when the Commission samples will be displayed and available for purchase in aid of Charity.

In summary, the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers brings benefits to its members, its Charitable beneficiaries and to the great City of London – and it simply leaves me, therefore, to ask you all to be upstanding and toast that most wonderful of materials – GLASS.