



# Company Comments

Newsletter of the Honourable Company of Freemen  
of the City of London of North America

Spring 2022<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Spring 2022 edition of *Company Comments* was edited by **FW (Russ) Russell-Rivoallan**, Warden and Communications Chair of The Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America.

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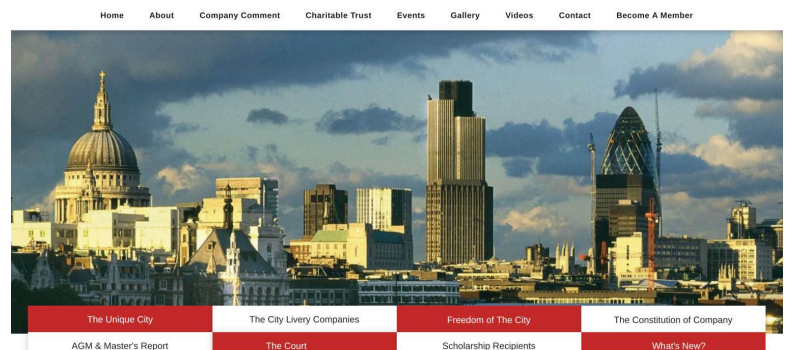
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## The Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America

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Welcome to the website of the Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America

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## The Master's Message



### Michèle McCarthy

Master of the Honourable Company of Freeman  
of the City of London of North America

As my tenure ends after two one-year terms as Master, I would like to reflect on some remarkable times. The Court debated how to face the unprecedented COVID crisis that befell us all in March 2020. After some discussion, the Court decided to keep calm and carry on with our usual yearly calendar, adapting it as needs evolved. So, a little belatedly in July 2020, we held our Annual General Meeting. I was honoured to be elected Master.

The new enthusiastic people joining that Court reinforced an already solid roster of Officers, Past Masters and Wardens. The Court brought energy and vitality to tackle a difficult year, which sadly would turn into two long years. We soon realized that it would be impossible to meet in-person and to enjoy our splendid traditions. Notwithstanding the challenges of the outside world, we came through our years of COVID with aplomb and a new resolve.

Undaunted, the challenges of 2020-21-22 were overcome and the objectives that I set out were met.

The priorities were to:

- a. **demonstrate relevance** to our members,
  - i. by adapting our events to an online platform,
  - ii. by creating networks for the members within the Company and beyond to enhance their careers and to enrich their social lives, and,
  - iii. by cultivating the Company's connections to the City of London;
- b. **grow the membership**;
- c. **challenge the Court** to innovate and to make these years memorable; and,
- d. **achieve these priorities in a COVID world**. By changing and adapting our way of doing things to ensure that our members received real value from their association with us.

The very able Court met the challenge.

- **Our Honorary Clerk and former Membership Chair, Hans Bathija**, was tireless in advocating for the Honourable Company, resulting in our welcoming 29 new members in 2020/2021 and 12 new members so far in 2022. Currently our membership stands at a whopping 115. Those members come from across North America, including many American members, as well as members in Mexico, Thailand, and France. 16 members were presented to the

Chamberlain's Court and received the Freedom of the City. **Jason Burgoin** took over the Membership portfolio and continues to build on the strong work done to date.

- **Our Honorary Treasurer, Jeff Lewis**, continued his strong oversight of our revenues and financial controls with the effect that the Honourable Company is on a sound financial footing. The matching contribution that I championed in 2021 was highly successful and raised over \$2,500.
- **Our Events Chair, Rob Andrews**, organized our First Thursday Social Event along with a slew of other entertaining and thought-provoking events. His Speaker Series has come into its own with many exciting speakers in 2022/23. We continue to access many events from the Livery Companies and the Lord Mayor's Office. Following Ishrani's lead, Rob helped us embrace new software, like Mail-Chimp and Eventbrite. A very impressive legacy for the next Court to build upon!
- **Our Charitable Trust Chair, Past Master John Welch**, continued to work with George Brown College on our scholarship. Under his leadership, the relationship is strong, and the scholarship is on fabulous footing. Indeed, the best that it has ever been.
- **Our Past Master, Ishrani Jaikaran**, was a resource and sounding board for us all and was the liaison to Guildhall and the Chair of the 2022 Annual Dinner. Ishrani quietly and effectively clarified a wide array of things with appropriate nuances, commencing with the website to the paperwork required to obtain the Freedom.
- **Our Communications Chair, FW (Russ) Russell-Rivollan**, took over this portfolio to strategically enhance the Company's communications efforts, internally and externally, as well as across all stakeholder groups.
- **Derwin Mak**, the Company's **Honorary Editor**, re-introduced the Company's newsletter, *Company Comments*, successfully ensuring it was issued regularly throughout the period, thus making it an important means of communicating with our entire membership. As he leaves the Court, we all wish to thank him for his dedication to this important work and for providing many interesting and entertaining articles in a rejuvenated and vibrant circular.
- **Past Masters John Welch and Dean Smith** are leaving the Court at this meeting. We would like to thank them for their many years of work and dedication. They actively participated in our Court meetings, giving important perspective as well as sensible and thoughtful guidance.
- **All the Officers** along with our Wardens have been diligent in building substantial links to the Livery Companies in the City of London. That indefatigable effort has meant that we now benefit from a new spirit of co-operation among the Honourable/Worshipful Companies.

In my view, the Court has ably met the priorities set for them. Even though 2021 was another year of COVID, the Court re-doubled its efforts to enhance the Honourable Company's relevance to you, our members, by holding interesting online events, by helping to build networks to assist you in your career and by enhancing the connections to the City of London. This work was skillfully begun by our predecessors over forty years ago. Without their vision and foresight, we would not be such a strong Company.

In closing, I would like to thank the Court for their dedication to the Honourable Company. I have every confidence that the new Court for 2022/23 under the leadership of Hans Bathija will keep up the momentum and position the Company to soar in the post-COVID world.

## The Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1952, Her Royal Highness The Princess Elizabeth ascended the Throne of Canada upon Her father's passing. In 2022 Canada, together with all the Realms and Members of The Commonwealth, as well as the whole world, will be celebrating Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, marking The Queen's 70th anniversary on the Throne. She is Canada's longest reigning Sovereign and the first to celebrate a platinum jubilee.

To mark this historic milestone, a series of initiatives are taking place throughout Canada to honour The Queen's service and dedication to this country and celebrate Canadian achievements of the last seven decades. For more information about what is planned, check our Heritage Canada's website, which is regularly updated:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/platinum-jubilee.html>

The Honourable Company of Freeman of the City of London of North America is partnering with Rotary International and St John Ambulance in the lighting of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon at Casa Loma, in Toronto on 2<sup>nd</sup> June as part of the Commonwealth Beacon Chain. Ceremony will feature a bagpiper, a bugler and a choir.

[The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacons 2022 \(queensjubileebeacons.com\)](http://queensjubileebeacons.com)



Over the past seven decades, Queen Elizabeth II has been a constant presence in the lives of Canadians and has witnessed growth and significant change in Canadian society. The Queen has cultivated enduring ties with Canadians over years of connecting with our rich cultures and traditions.

Throughout her reign, The Queen has made 22 official tours of Canada, more than any other Commonwealth country. Her travels have brought her east, west and north, to large cities, small towns and tiny hamlets. She has met countless Canadians and been present for our most important milestones and celebrations. Her Majesty has said in multiple speeches that she always regarded Canada as home and shares in the pride we take in our achievements.

Here is some information on The Royal Family's relationship with Livery Companies<sup>2</sup>:

The involvement of the Royal Family with the Livery Companies is by no means a modern phenomenon. Monarchs of note such as King James I, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I have all been members of Livery Companies. Both King George VI and Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother were members of Livery Companies.

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<sup>2</sup> This information was gleaned from our fellow Freeman, Paul D. Jagger, Freeman and Court Assistant of the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists <http://cityandlivery.co.uk/the-city-explained/the-city-the-crown-and-the.html>

Following the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002, the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers commissioned a painting to capture the moment when the Lord Mayor presented the Pearl Sword to the Queen at Temple Bar. The Pearl Sword was a present to the City by Queen Elizabeth I and is one of five ceremonial swords owned by the City. Let us see which Livery Company will mark The Sovereign's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

In modern times, the Crown retains a special relationship with the City, indeed the Sovereign is the only person who outranks the Lord Mayor in the City, and even so the Lord Mayor's permission is sought before the Sovereign enters the City. By custom, the Lord Mayor greets the Sovereign at the City limits, often at the site of the old Temple Bar, and presents the Pearl Sword of the City of London (hilt uppermost) to him or her in recognition of the Sovereign's authority.

Many members of the Royal Family are active in the City's Livery Companies, with several having held the office of Master or Prime Warden. The following is a selection of some of the notable connections between the Royal Family and the Livery Companies:

HM The Queen is Royal Patron of The Worshipful Company of Shipwrights and the Honourable Company of Master Mariners in addition to being a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Drapers and a Freeman of the City of London.

For the information of our Members, The Queen is the patron of the following Canadian organizations<sup>3</sup>:

**Civilian organizations:** Canadian Medical Association; Canadian National Exhibition Association; Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire; Royal Alberta Museum; Royal Architectural Institute of Canada; Canadian Red Cross Society; Federated Women's Institutes of Canada; Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada; Canadian Cancer Society; Save the Children Canada; Royal Canadian Humane Association; Canadian Nurses Association; Royal Canadian Legion; Toronto French School; St. John's-Ravenscourt School; Queen's Plate; Royal Agricultural Winter Fair of Toronto; Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo; Royal Manitoba Winter Fair; Royal Winnipeg Ballet; Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; Royal British Columbia Museum; Royal Saskatchewan Museum; Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre; and St. John Ambulance.

**Military Organizations:** Royal Canadian Air Force Benevolent Fund; Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund; Navy League of Canada; Royal Canadian Naval Association; and Royal Canadian Air Force Association.

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<sup>3</sup> Information taken from: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Canadian\\_organizations\\_with\\_royal\\_patronage](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Canadian_organizations_with_royal_patronage)

## New Clerk of the Chamberlain's Court: Ms Laura Miller

Ms Laura Miller succeeds Mr. Murray Craig, who served as Clerk for 25 years, as Clerk of the Chamberlain's Court. Ms Miller is the first woman to be appointed to this ancient position within the Chamberlain's Court of the City of London Corporation.

A familiar figure amongst the Livery Movement, Ms Laura Miller served as Deputy Clerk for the past seven years. She has been the principal point of contact for the Members of our Honourable Company seeking Freedom of the City of London. Many of our current members received their Freedom from her!

Ms Ishrani Jaikaran, Past Master of our Honourable Company and Court Warden responsible for City and Guildhall Liaison recalls her close collaboration with Laura Miller: *"As City and Guildhall Liaison for our Honourable Company, I serve as focal point for the administration of our Members' Freedom applications. I have a close and long-standing relationship with the Clerk's Office and always appreciated Laura's helpful assistance. I welcome her appointment as Clerk, and wish her every success."*

The Chamberlain's Court combines ancient traditions and historic functions with its role as a modern local authority at the centre of the Capital, serving the 'Square Mile' and providing services that have local, national, and international significance.

The role of the Clerk of the Chamberlain's Court of City of London Corporation was established in antiquity but serves a very modern and carried purpose, supporting the Chamberlain of the City of London.

The Clerk is responsible for the admission of the Freedom of the City of London. As Chief Executive Officer of the Chamberlain's Court, the Clerk works effectively and efficiently to maximise the income generated by the Court's retail offering.

The Clerk conducts the ceremony of admitting people to the Freedom of the City of London which dates from the early 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Recipients have included Mark Carney, former Governor of the Bank of England and the Bank of Canada; Ed Mirvish, Canadian entrepreneur and theatrical impresario Lucciano Pavarotti, tenor and opera legend; Yehudi Menuin, violinist and conductor; the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Annie Lennox, singer of The Eurhythmics, as well as many members of our Honourable Company.

### Fun Fact:

The Freedom of the City is one of the oldest surviving traditional ceremonies still in existence today. It is believed to have been first presented in 1237.

The Clerk also liaises closely with the Livery Companies on matters such as Charters, Ordinances and protocol. The Chamberlain's Court

also conducts historical research into past ceremonies and assist people tracing their ancestors who were Freemen. It is for this reason that the information provided by future Freeman of our Honourable Company must be as exact and precise as possible, providing all supporting documentary evidence as requested.

Laura is a lively and confident speaker and has the ability to bring history to life, and is a fully qualified Blue Badge Tourist Guide of the City of London. She readily shares her knowledge during the Freedom Ceremonies she conducts. This editor had the pleasure of receiving his freedom from Ms Miller in February 2018.

## Election of the new Chamberlain and Chief Financial Officer of the City of London Corporation

In April 2021, Members of the Court of Common Council elected the first-ever female Chamberlain and Chief Financial Officer of the City of London Corporation, Ms Caroline Al-Beyerty. Previously, Ms Al-Beyerty served as the organisation's Deputy Chamberlain.

The Chamberlain's relationship with the Court of Common Council is the same that applies to other local authority Chief Finance Officers (CFO) and she therefore has the same responsibilities placed on her as any other CFO in the UK.

Through the Chamberlain's Court she will also administer the admission to the Freedom of the City and personally admit all Honorary Freemen. She is also responsible to the Court of Aldermen for constituting new livery companies and interpreting and amending their ordinances and charters.

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## Members of our Honourable Company are also Freemen/Liverymen of the following City of London Livery Companies



The many ancient Livery Companies are descendants of the City Guilds of the Middle Ages. These started when people following the same trade or craft, such as butchers, basket makers, grocers, haberdashers and so on, began to live in the same neighbourhood and work together for mutual good and protection. Gradually the Guilds evolved into combinations of trades unions, monopolies, training colleges, trading standards officers and friendly societies.

The Guilds set standards for the food, drink and manufactured goods that they sold and had powers to enforce them. They trained apprentices and supported their members in sickness and old age. When there was no consumer protection or social legislation, they performed a valuable and stabilising role in London. In the Middle Ages each Guild developed its own distinctive clothing, a gown (or livery) granted by the City for its exclusive use and from the 1500's onwards, the Guilds became known as Livery Companies.

There are old and ancient traditions associated with Livery Companies, including the right of Liverymen and women to elect the City Sheriffs and the Lord Mayor. The Livery Companies also play a prominent part in many great occasions such as the Lord Mayor's Show in the City of London, the United Guilds' service held at St Paul's Cathedral and at the annual Sheep Drive over London Bridge. Pageantry and ceremony form one of the more colourful aspects of Livery life.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> More information about Livery Companies can be found at: [www.liverycompanies.info](http://www.liverycompanies.info)

Our current membership includes Freemen/Liverymen of the following Companies:

**The Worshipful Company of Haberdashers (8)** has its origins in medieval times. Throughout six and a half centuries, it has moved away from its historical involvement in the trade of haberdashery and developed into a significant supporter of schools and education in England and Wales. In 1448, the Company was granted a charter of incorporation by Henry VI enabling it to hold land and to have its own Hall in which to hold meetings. The first of three subsequent Halls was built on the corner of Staining Lane and Maiden Lane (now Gresham Street) in 1459. By 1650, the population of London had grown to such an extent that it was no longer possible to control the haberdashery trade. This resulted in a change of direction, over a long period, to the Company as it is now, with its emphasis on education and charitable giving. To this day the Company continues its historical involvement in the governance of the City of London.

Founded in the 11th Century, **The Worshipful Company of Saddlers (25)** was a medieval guild responsible for the regulation of the saddlery trade, craft and standards in the City of London and more broadly in the United Kingdom. Today, the Company's activities are based on charitable foundations that support and encourage the development of saddlery, equestrianism and education; and, in particular, where they coincide with disability and youth. Through its 6th Royal Charter of 1995, The Saddlers retains its role as a champion and supporter of the trade, craft skills and equestrianism. This is delivered through its many affiliations, philanthropic donations and member engagement. An emphasis on training, education and pathways to employment has been maintained for much of the last century. The Company seeks to maximise the value of its assets for the ultimate benefit of the trade, those in society who genuinely need charitable support, the sustainment of the Company and for its members.

**The Worshipful Company of Scriveners (44)** was originally known as *the Myserie of the Writers of the Court Letter and, since its incorporation, as Master Wardens and Assistants of the Company of Scriveners of the Cittie of London* [sic]. It is one of the few livery companies that from its foundation to the present day has been influential in setting the standards for a living profession, namely that of scrivener notary. The company's first ordinances were granted in 1373. Its Royal Charter was granted by King James I on 28 January 1617.

**The Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers (47)** Also known as the Stationers Company, this livery company began as a guild of stationers (makers of writing materials) in 1403, evolved into a printer's guild, and later included the publishing industry. It eventually expanded its trades to include journalism and writing and the industries that serve them, such as paper and printing machines. It is one of the livery companies still attached to its trades and therefore serves as both a professional organization and as a livery charity, especially on aid to students of the communications and content industries and to schools for disadvantaged children. The Stationers Company is very future-looking and is heavily involved in programming and awards related to IT app development, web publishing, e-book publishing, and podcasting; it is not just for people who archive old books (though it has many bibliophiles who love ancient first editions!).

**The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers (52)** was constituted by the Court of Aldermen in 1569, granted a livery of thirty in 1825 (in more recent years extended to five hundred) and received its Royal Charter from George VI in 1937. The senior officer of the Company is known as the Prime Warden. The Company was formed to regulate and control the basketmaking trade in the City of London and by an order of Common Council in 1463 trade was concentrated in the manor of Blanche Appleton, in the area of the present Guild Church of St. Margaret Pattens. In addition to its Charitable Trust the Basketmakers actively supports the three armed services with its involvement with 8th Battalion The Rifles, HMS Richmond and RAF ISTAR.

**The Worshipful Company of Glaziers & Painters of Glass** (53) is one of the ancient Livery Companies of the City of London. It dates from the 14th century. Today its members play a full role in the civic life of the City of London and enjoy valuable networking and social opportunities. Through its charity, The Glaziers Foundation, it supports education and conservation, and all its activities are devoted to promoting the art and craft of stained glass.

**The Worshipful Company of Needle makers** (65) was granted its first Charter by Oliver Cromwell in 1656, the first of only two such Commonwealth Charters. After the Restoration, a Royal Charter was granted by King Charles II in 1664. The Company has historic links to the needle making industry, although few UK manufacturers remain. It continues the tradition of support for the Lord Mayor and the City of London and its charitable giving supports organisations and individuals associated with the use of needles as well as education. Its Liverymen (up to 250) enjoy good fellowship at a busy programme of events at a variety of venues, although it does not have its own hall.

**The Worshipful Company of Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers** (74) maintains the traditions and customs of the City of London and supports the Lord Mayor and Corporation in promoting the status and the image of the City. It also provides a link to the modern usage of gold and silver wire and thread. The Company seeks to increase its charity funds to support and improve its ability to make grants and donations to a wide variety of worthy causes, mainly connected with the City, education, the arts, the armed forces, and gold and silver wire trades as well as other causes espoused by the Master or individual Liverymen. It does so whilst promoting the good fellowship and welfare of its Liverymen, Freemen and their guests.

**The Worshipful Company of International Bankers** (106) is a professional association with membership mostly drawn from individuals who have or are seeking a qualification in professional financial services. The WCIB is established by Royal Charter to promote the development and advancement of the science art and practice of the international banking and financial services industry for the benefit of the public and to provide a forum for professional and social exchanges between members, others in the financial services industry and those who benefit from the industry. Members raise and donate money to the Company's charitable fund the International Bankers Charitable Trust (reg 1087630) which has so far donated over £1 million to educational and other charities as well as funding prizes for academic excellence. Although the Company is new it follows the tradition of all City of London livery companies in supporting the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, Aldermen and Corporation of the City of London in all matters relevant to the life and dignity of the City of London.

**The Worshipful Company of Security Professionals** (108) traces its origins back to 1999 when the now Past Masters, Steve Neville OBE and John Purnell GM QPM DL registered The Guild of Security Professionals with the City of London Chamberlain's Office. On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Court of Alderman was petitioned and it declared that the Company became the 108th Livery Company from February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008. In 2009 the Security Professionals' Company petitioned the privy council for a royal charter and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II approved an Order instructing the Lord Chancellor to affix the great seal to the Worshipful Company's charter, which was granted on 15 February 2010. The Company's Charitable Trust provides education and health services to members of the security profession; managed by a board of twelve trustees all of whom are members of the Company.

**The Worshipful Company of Educators** (109) was granted livery status on 10 September 2013 by the Court of Aldermen. The Company was founded on 24 May 2001 as a Guild to represent the education and training profession and for charitable purposes. On 15 September 2009 the City's Court of Aldermen granted the petition of the Guild of Educators and agreed that the Guild be constituted one of the Companies of the City, without a grant of livery, with the title of The Company of Educators and that its Ordinances be approved and duly enrolled amongst the records of the City. Upon being advanced to the status of City livery company in 2013, the Company was accorded the official title of Worshipful Company of Educators, although less formally it can continue to be known as the Educators' Company.

On 11 October 2017, the Worshipful Company of Educators was granted a Royal Charter by the Queen. The Company provides a forum through meetings and social occasions to bring together members from all parts of the education world to discuss and exchange views on matters of topical interest. The Educators' Trust provides Awards and Bursaries for outstanding, innovative and inspirational practice in a wide range of educational subjects, levels and settings.

**The Company of Communicators** (111<sup>5</sup>) is part of the 'Livery' - the City of London's trades associations and Guilds. The Company contributes to society through charitable giving and by promoting the communications profession – including public relations, public affairs, corporate, external, and internal communications. It does so to the Livery movement, the City of London, and the wider world. The Company and its Members value integrity, trust, fellowship, inclusivity, and diversity. With some 150 members, it is modern in its outlook and approach, recognising that professional communication is an essential activity throughout society. The Company's mission is to provide a platform for charitable giving and social action on behalf of the communications industry in the UK through pro bono activities – donating a proportion of its Charitable Fund to worthy causes every year. It also promotes education and learning, building understanding and appreciation, of the practice of communications within the Livery, City of London and beyond. Finally, The Communicators create networking and fellowship opportunities for senior communications practitioners.

**The Guild of Freemen of the City of London**<sup>6</sup> is a large association of almost 2,000 members with a special interest in the City. All Freemen are welcome to join, whether or not they belong to a Livery Company. Our members are men and women from all backgrounds, with a wide variety of interests. Our social programme is the City's most extensive, and includes events with privileged access for Guild members, as well as opportunities to dine in some of London's finest Livery Halls and at our Guildhall Banquet. Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal is an Honorary Member of the Guild and, while our Centenary Master in 2008, attended the Banquet as well as many other events during the year.

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<sup>5</sup> The Company of Communicators is expected to achieve Livery status in 2022.

<sup>6</sup> The Guild of Freemen is not a Livery Company *per se*, but is open to all who have received The Freedom of the City.

## Past Events

### 16 November 2021: The Highgate Vampire



Derwin Mak, Warden of the Court of the Honourable Company, gave a presentation by Zoom about the Highgate Vampire on Tuesday, November 16, 2021. He recounted the history of the only vampire scare in modern London history.

From the 1960's to 1970's, residents of north London thought a vampire haunted Highgate Cemetery. These rumours led to the famous vampire hunt on the night of Friday, March 13, 1970, when over a hundred would-be vampire hunters broke into the cemetery with ITV News following them. The Highgate Vampire also sparked a rivalry between David Farrant, President of the British Psychic and Occult Society, and Sean Manchester, Bishop of the Old Roman Catholic Church and exorcist. For almost 50 years, the two self-proclaimed vampire hunters accused each other of being incompetent to find the vampire.

Derwin's presentation was about more than the vampire scare and the rivalry between David Farrant and Sean Manchester. It also discussed the horrific burial practices of London in the nineteenth century, the establishment of the "Magnificent Seven" cemeteries of London, and the famous people buried at Highgate Cemetery, including the novelist George Eliot, the rock star Gene Simmons, and most notably Karl Marx.

The presentation had a surprise guest in the audience: Della Farrant, the widow of vampire hunter David Farrant. Ms. Farrant regularly searches Facebook and Twitter for mentions of the Highgate Vampire and discovered our Honourable Company's tweet about it. She could not get her microphone to work, but in the chat feature, she reiterated her late husband's opinion that Sean Manchester lacked the skill to find the vampire (although in 1985, Manchester claimed to have tracked the vampire to Crouch Head and killed him there).

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### 8 December 2021: The Olympics and Human Rights



Akaash Maharaj, a Member of our Honourable Company and a Canadian triple gold medallist for the somewhat recondite sport of Equestrian Skill-at-Arms. On the first day of his first appearance at the International Championships, he came in dead last; the fetid stench of death hung about that performance. It was not until the subsequent Championships that he began to win medals. Nevertheless, riding out onto the field of honour, carrying Canada's flag, will always be one of his proudest and most joyous memories.

Akaash has seen sport draw bitter enemies together across borders, as peers in a shared passion, and has seen sport as a force for social change, transforming private hearts and public attitudes in a way that legislation never will. He was delighted to speak about the Olympics and human rights The subject had taken on a new urgency, as the

People’s Republic of China prepared to host the 2022 Winter Games, while it imprisoned a million Uyghurs in internment camps, and stood accused by the United Nations of ghoulish crimes against humanity.

The audience during this Zoom event included members of the broader community, of note Ms Tricia Smith, President of the Canadian Olympic Committee.

Akaash’s conclusion was that: “Sport touches everyone at a very deep level, which transcends reason. That power can rally people together to create a better world, just as it can be a weapon to prop up tyrannies and kleptocracies. It is a matter of choice, and individuals and states have a responsibility to make our choices wisely.”

*Akaash Maharaj served as a member of the Canadian Olympic Committee. He is a Director of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport. His web site is [www.Maharaj.org](http://www.Maharaj.org)*

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### **16 March 2022: Heraldry & Genealogy Event a Resounding Success**



The Honourable Company hosted a successful and widely attended Speaker Series during which the Honourable Company’s very own D. Brenton Simons presented his fascinating work and experience in the field of genealogy and its connections with heraldry in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Brenton’s event, titled *A “Thousand Heraldries, and Twilight Saints, and Dim Emblazonings”*: My Ventures and Adventures in Genealogy and Heraldry was attended by over 50 individuals via Zoom, and was also attended by an additional 20 participants via the Honourable Company’s live-stream as held on our Facebook page.

During his presentation, Brenton, an international leader in the field of family history, discussed the genealogical field today, including important DNA advances, in the context of the ground-breaking international work of [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org). He also recounted his own experiences in the study of heraldry, and shared numerous rarely seen armorial examples from personal and institutional collections.

Brenton is the President & CEO of American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society — The founding non-profit genealogical organization in America (established in 1845), and home of the Committee on Heraldry, the oldest non-governmental body concerned with heraldry. Today, the organization serves almost 400,000 members and millions of online users in 139 countries with 1.4 billion records at [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org) and it is the anchor location of the popular PBS television series Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. A member of the Honourable Company of Freeman of the City of London of North America, Brenton is a recipient of The John Adams Medal, The History Award Medal, The Bradford Award, and the Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History.

## Upcoming Events

**20 April 2022:** Annual General Meeting of the Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America.

This on-line meeting will take place on Zoom on Wednesday and Thursday 20 & 21 April from 11:30am to 2:30pm (EST)

**28 April 2022:** Speaker Series: Made in London: the establishment of UNESCO 76 years ago, and its impact today. Warden and Communications Chair, FW (Russ) Russell-Rivoallan will share his experiences gained after having recently retired from UNESCO.

This on-line meeting will take place on Zoom on Thursday April 28 at 12 noon (EST)

**13 May 2022:** The Master's Banquet will take place at the Royal Canadian Military Institute.

**Contact The Company's Honorary Clerk for more information:**

[clerk@freemenlondon.org](mailto:clerk@freemenlondon.org)

The incoming Master will be visiting the City in June to attend several City and Livery Company events. This includes the Livery Charity Chairs Group Conference and attending the Reflections of the Lord Mayor Gala. He will also be attending at Broomhall House in Dunfermline, Scotland where he is to receive the award of Great Shogun from the Order of the Scottish Samurai.

For more information about all up-coming events, please visit the Honourable Company's Event's page, which is up-dated frequently: [freemenlondon.org/events](https://freemenlondon.org/events)

## New Members:



The Master and Court of the Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America are pleased to welcome the following new members, on behalf of the entire membership of our Honourable Company!

### Mark R. Burdett

Mark is a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of International Bankers. He was formerly resident in London, and is now based in New York City, where he serves as Vice-President, Debt Capital Markets – Liability Management. He is a Debt Capital Markets professional with experience across global markets. Currently he is focused on providing Liability Management solutions for clients across the credit spectrum (Investment Grade, High Yield, and Distressed) and across geographies. His experience extends across bond and loan products. Prior to this, his career in Debt Capital Markets was spent in Origination, primarily focused on public and private debt issuances.

Mark was admitted as an **Affiliate Member** by decision of The Court in March 2022.

### Girdhari “Gilly” P. Bathija

G.P. Bathija was born on 6 June 1940 in Shikarpur, Sindh, India (Br) and fled with his family to Bombay, Dominion of India when he was seven years old during the Partition, where he landed as a refugee. In 1960, he made the courageous decision to leave his family and migrate via steamship to London, England. During his time in London, he held several jobs including lathe operator, theatre usher, minicab driver, and ultimately photo technician. He developed many photographs of the City during his time with Tudor Photography and Coopers Pearson. As a minicab driver in London from 1966-1967, he picked and dropped off passengers within the City of London itself. During his time in London, he met his wife, Susan Bathija, née Tan Saw Gaik, who was a Malaysian British nursing sister in London. They married, had two children in London, spent much time on Hampstead Heath and were regulars at the Old Bull and Bush. The family eventually migrated to Toronto in 1975, where they had one more child. During his time in Toronto, he continued his career in photography and film, working at Canada’s largest photofinisher, running a video store, and reluctantly retiring as a motion picture developer with Technicolor in 2009. He continues to reside in Toronto with his wife of 53 years. He is proud to remain a British subject, of his career in the photographic and film industry, and his heart shall always be in London.

Gilly was admitted as an **Affiliate Member** by decision of The Court in February 2022.

## New Members (cont'd):

### **Matthew J. Rowe**

Matthew is a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, and is the Chief Executive Officer of The Canadian Wool Council. Previously he served as Head of External Affairs for The Prince's Trust. Canada. Matthew is an accomplished leader with extensive experience in project management and partnership development, with the ability to build and motivate creative teams. He has an entrepreneurial mind-set with a track record of delivering results with exceptional political acumen and ability to manage diverse and high-level stakeholder relationships. Matthew is a proven communicator with international media experience and strong writing ability.

Matthew was admitted as a **Regular Member** by decision of The Court in February 2022.

### **Lt. (ret'd) J. Robert Walsh, MB, CD**

Robert is a former Officer of the Peel, Dufferin and Halton Regiment, whose allied regiment is the Royal Regiment of Fusilliers, based out of the Tower of London. He tracked a polar bear, grabbed a whale by the tail, and survived a bloody coup in Africa. A life-long volunteer he was awarded the Governor General's Medal of Bravery (MB), the Minister of Veteran's Affairs Commendation, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and the Canadian Forces Decoration (CD). A teacher by profession and temperament, he taught in Nova Scotia, Nigeria, Nunavut, and Ontario.

Anecdotally, Robert was using an LfT Oyster Card some 15 years before the TTC introduced its version, the Presto card.

Robert was admitted as an **Affiliate Member** by decision of The Court in January 2022.

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## Lady Whistledown's Society Papers

Lady Whistledown is currently undertaking the Grand Tour, and is hopefully expected to return in a future edition of Company Comments.

As she would have explained, the Grand Tour is an extremely exclusive endeavour, only undertaken by the very rich, mainly the children of the aristocracy.

The most popular destination is France as French was the most commonly spoken second language in London in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. It was also the easiest place to get to from Britain, at the time. The fastest crossing was from Dover to Calais and the roads to Paris were very good. Today we may consider using the Eurostar.

From Paris, travellers usually proceeded to the Alps and then by boat on the Mediterranean to Italy, which is still the most elegant means of transport. They would usually visit Rome and Venice, but their tour might also include Spain, Portugal, Germany, Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Baltic.

Whilst travelling, this Editor wishes Lady Whistledown only the best of adventures!