

Speech by Master, Prof John Uff, at Installation Dinner, 28 October 2014

Wardens, Masters, Liverymen, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you all to the Painters' Hall this evening, particularly our honoured guests to whom I shall return in a few moments. I am very much looking forward to working with the new team of Mike Goodridge as Senior Warden, Matt Bastone as Junior Warden, and all the Court of Assistants. We have also, in the most literal sense a new clerk. Elinor Pritchard was appointed in June and has since been gathering up the reins of office. Gaye Duffy, our Clerk for the past 16 years, generously extended her hand-over period so that only for the past 4 weeks has Elinor been at the wheel. During that time she has kept the ship firmly on course and weathered all the gusts and squalls that test those at the helm. Today's events are the first product of her stewardship and we look forward to a long period of calm sailing. So on behalf of the Company may I be the first formally to welcome Elinor as the new Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators.

Sadly Gaye Duffy is unable to be with us tonight, but at the Court meeting this afternoon her appointment as an Honorary Freeman of the Company was confirmed unanimously and we all look forward to welcoming her at future event of the company. Gaye for the past 4 years had the great benefit of a highly experienced and hard working Assistant, John White, and I am pleased that John will remain in post to assist Elinor in running company events. I add our gratitude to other stalwarts of the company who remain in post---George Bush our preacher and Jimmy James our Beadle. And as a newcomer, I welcome to our pianist Anthony Calnan---I too have occupied that seat when the Clockmakers could not afford a real pianist—and unlike my performances, tonight we have had all the notes in the right order!

I would like to say a big thank you on behalf of the company to our newest part-master Dr Derek Ross. Derek and Sylvia have had an excellent year and as a result the company has been set firmly on its feet after the shock of finding ourselves with a Royal Charter and many new and serious duties. Above all Derek has a winning habit of coming up smiling whatever happens. There were, a year ago, several difficult issues that had to be confronted. And I am glad to report that Derek has taken them all on, and has succeeded in re-structuring our affairs so that I can enjoy the benefits of his hard work. Derek I know that you and Sylvia are going to become one of the Company's Regular Dependables, and we all look forward to seeing you in a more relaxed mode in the future.

So now let me turn to the Company itself, The Worshipful Company of Arbitrators, and remind you that the Livery movement, in typical English fashion, started up some 700 years ago, roughly contemporary with the Inns of Court, The first of the companies in order of precedence are known as the Great 12. By the 18th Century the number of Liveries, mostly based on more ancient guilds and trades, had grown to 77. But there was then a pause of about 200 years, during which the Liveries would have become moribund, but for the fact that many of them had become immensely rich through bequests and property holdings. So they continued; and in 1926 sprang back to life with the first of the so-called Modern Livery Companies, the Master Mariners, of which we have two members here tonight, our own Past Masters Dancaster and Dundas. The Master Mariners were followed by, at the latest count, a further 33 modern companies, the latest being the Worshipful Company of Art Scholars who were granted Livery in February of this year. As No. 93 the Arbitrators fall exactly in the middle of the modern Livery movement, having been formed, as you all know, in 1982 and receiving our Royal Charter 30 years later in 2012.

While we have borrowed freely from the practices and traditions of the ancient Livery Companies, the Modern companies all represent a

contemporary living profession. They have each been set up to form a bridge between existing professional bodies and the City of London. And in the case of the Arbitrators, this gives us a unique position to speak on behalf of the many bodies which make up the Arbitration and Dispute Resolution community in London and elsewhere. Those bodies include the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and the London Court of International Arbitration, both of which were instrumental in our formation. But it is our Charter which now gives us the authority to “*foster the profession of arbitration and other forms of private dispute resolution*” and to act as the forum for members of all the professional bodies with interests in private dispute resolution and “*to exercise the role of Livery company within the traditions of the City of London*”.

So we, along with other Modern Livery Companies, are charged with upholding the interests of the wider professions which, in our case, include many overseas bodies and practitioners in our field. Within the City, we are one of 12 members of the Financial Services Group of Livery Companies which acts as the Liaison Group between the professions and the Lord Mayor's office. The FSG is tasked to ensure that, when the Lord Mayor represents the City both at home and abroad, that representation also includes the Institutions that makes the City the great power house of business and finance that it is. In this sense we are now one of the Modern Great 12.

So I turn briefly to my programme for the coming year, in which I intend the company's activities to incline more towards professional events in the field of arbitration, in which the company should have its own voice. The first of these will be a Seminar at Coutts in the Strand on 12 November on Ethical Rules for Advocates in Arbitration, following recent changes to the LCIA Rules and the IBA Guidelines. It is possible that this event might also be of interest to the bankers. On 16 December we have the annual Keating Chambers' Event on Developing your Arbitration Practice; and in January, as a change from the Mediation weekend of the last 4 years, we will be running an Arbitration weekend with a full scale mock arbitration conducted by

delegates from universities throughout the UK. On 11 February we are running a joint event with the Academy of Experts on issues of mutual interest. And for the Master's Lecture, on 25 March 2015, I am pleased to say the speaker will be Dr. Jackie Van Hoff, the new Director General of the LCIA. So we have some serious business to come. But alongside all that, there will also be a trip to the theatre later in November, a commemorative visit to the Ypres Battlefields in May and in July a weekend at the Buxton Opera Festival, each of these events being already well subscribed thanks to the Events Committee under David Wilson's leadership.

In addition to our professional activities the company remains seriously involved in social and charitable events concerned with education. The only current pupillage scheme available for trainee dispute resolvers is that run by our own Education Committee, after the Chartered Institute discontinued its scheme some years ago. The Charitable Trust, now under the expert chairmanship of Philip Fiedler, continues to support many worthwhile causes, including individuals in need of financial assistance while seeking to gain entry to the dispute resolution field, as well as initiatives aimed at dispute avoidance at many levels. The Livery Schools Link, chaired last year by Simon Underwood and this year by David Steward, organises voluntary work in improving numeracy and literacy for primary school children in deprived areas. While the work is well supported, the resources available are constantly outstripped by demand and David has asked me to mention that for anyone interested in joining this worthwhile cause, there will be a meeting at Merchant Taylor's Hall on 27 November. All of these activities depend on your continued support for the Charitable Trust and I encourage all members to contribute generously to its funds on a regular basis. This is something we emphasise to our new members, but the records show that the message also needs to be repeated regularly to our existing members.

Returning now to our guests, I welcome first the Master Constructor aka past Master Victoria Russell who is here with her husband Steve. Victoria has a glittering list of appointments as chairman, Master or president and we hope your latest role might reveal some common ground between our two companies—what would arbitrators do without constructors? Next I welcome Nic Birtles, Master Information Technologists, one of the modern Great 12, with his clerk Mike Jenkins. Nic has been in the forefront of those building our own Silicon Valley in Berkshire. Next I welcome Eddie Donaldson, Prime Warden of the Basketmakers with his clerk Fiona Janczur. Eddie has been Treasurer of the Royal National Life Boat Institution and has contributed enormously to bodies working with disadvantaged young people. And last but not least I welcome the Master clockmaker Jonathan Betts with his clerk Lt Col Oliver Bartram. I have regularly enjoyed their hospitality and erudition with Diana, who is of course a past master Clockmaker. With chess-clock hearings and pendulum arbitration becoming the norm we clearly have much in common.

I add my own welcome to the representatives of our affiliate units from HM armed forces, already introduced by the Senior Warden, particularly the prizewinners, Colour Sergeant Sabrina Gibbins from 13 Company ACF and AB Ryan Nettleship from our affiliate ship HMS Mersey. I should like to thank the Commander and crew of HMS Mersey for the hospitality extended to our members when the ship was in the Port of London on 5 October. Sadly I was arbitrating in Singapore at the time but those who were able to attend speak warmly of the event. We look forward to another year of combined operations.

Finally, I am delighted that Sir Rupert Jackson was able to accept my invitation to speak this evening. Rupert and I have been near contemporaries at the Bar for a long time, occasionally crossing swords. But in the last 15 years or so Rupert's career has taken off in a very public way, first as a Judge of the High Court including a spell in charge of the TCC when

he recruited more sitting high court judges to serve a spell in the TCC—who inevitably became the Jackson Five. Then to the Court of Appeal and, as though not satisfied with the meagre work-load of that job, taking on the Inquiry into Costs of Civil Litigation. This has led to far reaching recommendations which have just recently reached the Rule Books, via Parliament. Indeed I suspect the Jackson Forms will remain a catchphrase in the English language long after everyone has forgotten what it was that Jackson set out to reform. In every sense Rupert has become one of the immortals so I am particularly pleased that he and his wife Claire are able to be with us tonight.

So, in anticipation, may I ask all members of the company to rise and drink the toast to OUR GUESTS.