

Master Michael Goodridge MBE

27 October 2015

Wardens, Liverymen, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to you all to Vintners' Hall this evening and a thank you to this great Company of ours for allowing me to be your Master for the year ahead. It is thanks to Past Master Mackie that I am a member of this Company so he has a lot to answer for. It is an honour and I promise to give it my very best for the benefit of the Company. However you need to know that having celebrated a particular birthday last month the Ministry of Justice now consider I am senile and I have had to retire as a Deputy District Judge. The good news is that I am not too old to acquire a Mistress. Before my sons have a fit I should explain that it is their mother who is the Mistress- the Mistress Arbitrator. I know that Hilary will give me tremendous support in the year ahead.

We have a dream team of Matt Bastone as Senior Warden and David Wilson as Junior Warden, and all the Court of Assistants. For a short while we have our learned clerk Elinor Pritchard who sadly will be leaving us in a month or two but I can report that we have interviewed possible successors and hope to announce the successful candidate in the next day or so. It is Elinor, ably assisted by our Clerk's Assistant John White, that has organised so efficiently this evening's dinner. Thank you both and our best wishes to Elinor for the future. You will be missed. Part of the team will be our Beadle Jimmy James

and our Chaplain George Bush, whose graces are always memorable and tonight was no exception. Thank you also to all the staff here in Vintner's Hall who have given us a great evening both in food and service. Thank you also to our pianist Edward Dye. I am delighted to report that an Honorary Life Freeman, and 3 Freeman were installed earlier today. At Common Hall last April the Company agreed to make our former clerk of 16 years Gaye Duffy an Honorary Life Freeman. I am delighted she is here tonight as our guest, please stand and be recognised. All the Freeman admitted today are here tonight namely Spencer Hilliard. Dr Mary Malecha and Todor Vassilev. Please all stand to be recognised. I believe Todor Vassilev wishes to make a presentation.

Over the last year we have been ably led by Professor John Uff and I would like to thank him for his excellent year. It was John that has come up with the idea that this Company, through its Charitable Trust, should support two students on a travelling scholarship to Dubai worth £5000 each, which was approved by the Court earlier today and will increase the profile of the Company. Thank you John for your gift of the Loving Cup to the Company which is very handsome and having used it this evening I can confirm that it does not leak. Under John we have visited Ypres in May and I welcome Brigadier Johnny Walker and his wife Sue, who are personal guests of John. The Brigadier led the tour of the first war battlefields and made many friends in the Company. We also enjoyed our trip to Buxton and John has taken an active role in the Centenary Celebrations of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Thank you John and Diana.

This Company was created on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1981 as the 93<sup>rd</sup> in the list of Livery Companies in the City of London and received its Royal Charter on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012. Our principal objectives are *to foster arbitration and other forms of private dispute resolution*, as well as exercising the role of a Livery Company in the City of London and supporting the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs and Alderman. As a Modern Livery Company we represent a living profession and have the big advantage of having members from numerous professions that are involved in dispute resolution not just lawyers but also other professionals such as Surveyors, Engineers, Accountants, Architects and Dentists. We cover all types of disputes not only in construction, but also maritime and matrimonial. I am personally not an Arbitrator but was prior to retirement a Collaborative solicitor- a type of mediator in matrimonial disputes. The members of the Company cover a wide area of expertise and skills and can all learn from each other for the benefit of Dispute Resolution as a whole. Internationally London is regarded as one of, if not the, centre of excellence in Arbitration in the world and, with this Companies help and expertise, this will continue. We brief the Lord Mayor on arbitrational matters so that he or she can fly the flag of our profession across the world. Briefly, so far as the year ahead is concerned, there will be a programme of an educational nature that will interest all or most members, as well as a varied social calendar. Hilary and I will be attending the Agincourt Commemorative Service at Westminster Abbey on Thursday fully robed. Having already celebrated Waterloo, the French seem to be on the receiving

end!! The Wardens and I will be taking part in the Lord Mayor's Show on 14<sup>th</sup> November and then we have a visit to the Magic Circle on 17<sup>th</sup> November where the tickets are going fast ( only 2 left). On 1<sup>st</sup> December we have the Annual Dispute Resolution Symposium at Keating Chambers entitled 'Achieving Lift-Off in your Dispute Resolution Practice', with an array of distinguished panellists. There is the Carol Service on 17<sup>th</sup> December when we will be joined by the Worshipful Company of Solicitors and the Worshipful Company of Paviers. In the New Year, we have our Mediation Competition weekend, not forgetting the Masters Lecture, the Charter Commemorative Banquet at the Mansion House and the Masters weekend in Bristol in September next year.

I hope we will be able to develop our Pupillage scheme further, which is the only scheme available for trainee dispute resolvers and is run by our Education committee. I also wish to foster our link with primary schools in deprived areas of the City. Continued support for our Charitable Trust ably chaired by Philip Fidler is essential if we are to continue effectively with our charitable objectives, including of course our new venture into Travel scholarships.

Turning to our guests, I would welcome all the personal guests of our members. Thank you for coming and making this such a special occasion, especially all our sons. I add my welcome to the representatives of our Army Cadet Force introduced by the Senior Warden, particularly the prize winner, Kevin Hicks. I am only sorry we are unable to welcome the Commander and the Sailor of the Year from HMS Mersey. They are all at sea. I believe the

immediate Past Master and myself are to be invited to go to sea for one night in December in the Channel!!

Finally I am delighted that Sir Alan Ward was able to accept my invitation to speak this evening. Hilary and I have known Sir Alan when he lived in our part of Surrey many decades ago. Sir Alan retired from the Court of Appeal in February 2013. He started his legal career in Pretoria South Africa before being called to the bar in this country in 1964. He took silk in 1984 and was appointed a Judge of the High Court (Family Division) in 1988 and then a Lord Justice of Appeal in 1995. He has been involved in many interesting cases over the years and his most difficult and controversial case was the separation of the conjoined twins where allowing Jodie to live would cause Mary to die. Indeed his judgement in that case is one of the 15 most notable cases published by the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting to celebrate its 150 years. Despite its length it is recommended read for both lawyers and non-lawyers alike. Sir Alan has also added humour to the proceedings in the Courts. He is quoted as saying and I quote 'this case involves a number of – and here I must not fall into Dr Spooner's error –warring bankers'. And so it is that Sir Alan, after his distinguished career as a judge, has, in his words, turned from gamekeeper to poacher and is now Chairman of the Civil Mediation Council preaching the gospel of mediation against Litigation. Sir Alan you are very welcome. I would now ask all members of the Company to stand to drink a toast to our guests. Our guests.