

The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers

CITY OF LONDON

THE MASTER

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Dear Liverymen & Freemen,

It seems to have arrived sooner than I expected but, sadly, this is my last "Master's Mailing".

After an unusual twelve months, the Company year will begin afresh on 22nd September when our Court will meet online to install the new officers and I think we can look forward, in a spirit of optimism, to a year in which we gradually emerge from varying forms of "lockdown" into a more familiar world.

It would be very helpful if you could please indicate to me (pavimor@icloud.com) how you feel about attending events over the next few months. It may be that this is completely out of the question, particularly if you are shielding yourself or caring for vulnerable relatives. On the other hand, it may be that you are now ready to throw caution to the wind and to meet in the City at the first available opportunity. Please let me know your thoughts so that we can either plan for a small event sooner rather than later or, alternatively, hold fire for now until circumstances change.

From the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, to date, we have seen the Livery Halls closed and all face to face events cancelled. This includes the Common Halls for election of the Sheriffs and Lord Mayor, as well as the Lord Mayor's Show in its traditional form. However, the Halls are beginning to reopen with appropriate social distancing measures in place. This generally means that they have a much lower capacity than would usually be the case.

Although we cancelled all face to face events after the Budget Banquet, we have continued the programme of History of Tax lectures online, with a record number attending the last lecture. We also have some social events including an online wine tasting on 22nd September, albeit with reduced numbers. We will be holding more virtual events over the coming months and we are keeping under careful review the possibility of holding our Carol Service and supper. We will make a decision by mid-October and welcome your thoughts. However, it will probably need a positive change in circumstances for us to be able to proceed with this. In the meantime, we have in mind a

virtual tea tasting and perhaps an online magic show. If you see any other ideas which appeal please let me know!

Even during the worst of the crisis, our Committees continued their good work. On Membership, we will have a splendid number of admissions of new members and advancement to the Livery at our forthcoming meeting of the Court. Our Social Committee has been busy planning for the year ahead with virtual events in the near-term and face to face events planned for next calendar year.

Our Charities Committee has also been extremely active in continuing the flow of donations and support. We have received some news from Hackney Quest, a charity which supports young people. They transferred all of their activity to an online format and still managed to engage and retain most of the young people through zoom sessions and volunteers running mentoring sessions individually and in groups. As lockdown began to ease, they arranged for their mentors to meet the young people outside. They also established a foodbank and arranged for deliveries between March and August. They were able to provide two bags of food to over 80 families all over Hackney, including hot, freshly cooked meals. Hackney Quest realised very early on that many of the young people and families did not have access to IT equipment for schoolwork at home. Our donation was used to purchase five reconditioned laptops for students. This is making a real difference to the work they are able to do.

As I have mentioned in my previous mailings, we know that many members are experiencing hardship and we are keen to offer support to any members who may find themselves in difficult circumstances. The Tax Advisers' Benevolent Fund ("TABF") provides assistance to members who are in financial need, particularly as a result of circumstances beyond their control. We also offer moral support to members who may be in difficulties of other kinds and may feel, for any reason, that they cannot find help elsewhere. We are very grateful to Past Master John Dewhurst for leading this work and he can be contacted by email at jdewhurst@chowndewhurst.com or by calling him on 07799 118 382.

I am extremely grateful to the generosity of a number of members which has enabled us to purchase the entire stock of photographs of Company events from 2006 from Michael O'Sullivan. We are working on making this available on the Company website for members to download.

Once again, I attach an item which is just a little fun. Many thanks to James Dixon and the Educators for forwarding the Liveryman's Lament.

Finally, I come to the most important part of this Master's Mailing. I am enormously grateful to so many members of the Company for their work, support and contributions. We could not function without all of our members who serve on Committees and working groups. I thank our Committee Chairs Mike Gibbons (Charities), Matthew Peppitt (Membership), Vaughan Robinson (Social) and Caroline Turnbull-Hall who has taken over as Chair of Social, Richard Geldard (Finance) who devotes so many hours to support us as Treasurer, Kevin Phillips (Lord Mayor's Briefing Group) and Bill Dodwell who served earlier in the year, Morag Loader (History of Tax Group), Kevin Thomas (Assistants' Committee), John Dewhurst (Ceremonial and Regulations Committee and Member Support) and those with special responsibilities including Nick Goulding (101 Squadron) and Michael Godbee (Financial Services Group).

Special thanks are owed to James Dixon, Assistant Clerk (Court), who deputised with great professional skill for our Clerk for several months over the last year. I also particularly thank our Wardens, Sue Christensen, Bob Harland and Mike Gibbons as well as the Deputy Master Marcus Fincham. The Master & Wardens Committee has met exceptionally frequently this year as we have grappled with the Covid-19 crisis and the support of the Deputy Master and Wardens has been extraordinary!

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Court and most of all our Beadle, Andy Bignold and deputy Beadle, Geoff Tucker, both of whom we hope to see sooner rather than later and, in particular, our Learned Clerk, Stephen Henderson, without whom the Master would at times have been floundering! My sincere thanks to all.

I wish you all the very best in keeping safe and healthy and in good spirits and I very much hope to see you again soon in person!

Kind regards,

Paul

Paul Morton
Master, Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers

The Liverymen's Lament

We heard our fate – “Don’t congregate!” – the Companies were aghast
Corona’s struck, we’re out of luck, our meeting days are past.

No dinners at the Skinners’, or any other Halls
The Pewterers and Fruiterers are silent, like St Paul’s.

“Stay at home - don’t try to roam” - so nobody’s around,
The Haberdashers dash away; the Founders can’t be found.
Barbers are barred from Monkwell Square, the Cutlers’ links are cut,
The Stationers are stationary, and every Hall is shut.

The Saddlers are unsaddled, Musicians make no sound,
The Coopers are cooped up at home, nobody’s badged or gowned.
The Chandlers - Wax and Tallow - have candles no one needs
Our Halls are lying fallow, their gardens growing weeds.

The cellars of the Leathersellers – sadly underused,
No one can dine with Vintners’ wine, and Brewers feel bruised.
The City’s empty now; but still, the Companies will thrive
They’ve been through times like this before - in Sixteen sixty-five!

With acknowledgment to Geoffrey Preston, Barbers’ Company