

## *The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers*

### *Deputy Master's Report – 2024/25*

I am writing this report shortly before stepping down as Master and can reflect on a most enjoyable year. This was greatly helped by the fact that LNER's service from West Yorkshire had none of the interruptions of the previous year!

We continued to develop our strategy. We made more progress in some areas than in others but that will ever be the case.

#### *Growing our membership*

Growing our membership helps to strengthen the Company, now and for the future. It also increases our influence in the tax profession and the City of London.

Our membership is, of course, your membership. Every member can help the Company to grow, and every member that does so – sponsoring a new Freeman through to admission – is individually appreciated, in the form of a free guest place at one of our major events. Just ask one of the Membership Committee for details.

During the spring, we held an evening for prospective members at IT Hall. This was an informal gathering, largely advertised via LinkedIn. We attracted over thirty attendees and seven of them joined as new Freeman in June with others interested in following them. We held another similar event in early September and I expect that these will become regular events.

We held a celebration of our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Shard in May, greatly helped by sponsorship from QX Global. The room capacity was 70 and we managed to squeeze in 72 members and prospective members. This was our first experience of sponsorship and we look forward to working more with QX Global in the future.

On the other hand, we lost members during the year. As we are now 30 years old, it is inevitable that some of our original members will depart and some of our newer members may find that they do not have the time to devote to Company events. We have taken steps to find out why members leave in the hope that we can address some of the causes.

It has been encouraging to see the increase in the number of Liverymen. The first step to becoming a Liveryman is to obtain your Freedom of the City of London. We set up group admission ceremonies at Guildhall a couple of years ago and these are now well established. Many thanks to Carolyn Finch for organising these ceremonies and for looking after membership matters generally.

#### *Delivering events and activities that members find attractive*

Our Social committee works hard to provide a broad range of activities. We continue with virtual events which can be attractive for those who live far away from London. We also hold occasional weekend events which may be attractive for those who are working full time five days a week.

I wanted to “do something different” during my year. Thus, for example, we held one of our social lunches at Watermen’s Hall rather than Ironmongers’ Hall and participated in a dinner on SS Great Britain in Bristol with the Engineers and three other Livery companies.

I was particularly pleased to be able to broaden the range of Halls that we use for our major events. We visited Mercers’ Hall for the first time for our Budget Banquet and Tallow Chandlers’ Hall for the first time in over 20 years for our Civic and Charities lunch.

In September we launched our Young Tax Advisers group which we hope will enthuse our younger members.

### *Increasing the impact of our charitable and educational support*

Two factors help to increase our impact – money and people. I am pleased to report that income donated by our members increased by over £8,000 (30%) this year. This is partly the impact of our new members and partly because of the positive response to a circular I sent last November asking existing members to increase their donations. Thanks to you all for your response.

Our Education sub committee goes from strength to strength. They continue to work with Mulberry UTC, take part in Careers Fairs for those interested in a career in tax and help to mentor students that we support in the tax examinations.

One of the highlights of any Master’s year is the visit by the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and many Livery Masters to Treloar’s School. It was wonderful to see the positive approach of all at the school, both students and staff. The approach is to focus on what the students can do, not what they can’t. I was delighted that the Charities committee agree to help the refurbishment of one of their accommodation blocks by purchasing a height adjustable sink.

### *Promotion of tax within the City and beyond*

We continue to support the Lord Mayor and City of London at events such as the Common Halls and the United Guilds Service. We also attended the Treloar’s dinner and the Sheriffs’ Ball. I managed to Escape the Tower (of London) thanks to generous donations from many members!

We work with the Chartered Institute of Taxation and Association of Taxation Technicians in areas such as Careers fairs.

The Lord Mayor’s Tax Briefing Group is very well regarded in the City for the briefing it provides to the Lord Mayor. Alderman Simon Pryke confirmed this when he said a few words following his admission as a Companion in June.

We continue to work with our military affiliates. I attended two dinners of the Management Accounting Section (Army) in Andover and Winchester and awarded our prize. A large group of us visited RAF Brize Norton in June with the hope of a

refuelling flight over the North Sea. Sadly, technical issues meant that the flight had to be cancelled but, instead, we visited their workshop where one of the Voyager planes was undergoing a 12-year service – basically everything that could be taken out and serviced was.

HMS Bangor remains in the Gulf so we have not been able to visit them. However we hope to have one of her Commanders as our guest at our Installation Dinner.

*And in conclusion*

Finally a few thanks. Firstly to the members of Court, Committees and Groups for the hard work that they have put in during the year and their ongoing support. Secondly to Robert and Carolyn for providing the essential back-office support which all Masters need. Finally to all of our members for participating in our activities during the year.

It only remains to wish Master Elect, Matthew Peppitt, and his Wardens, Caroline Turnbull-Hall, Howard Ashmore and Michael Ashdown, every success during the next year.

Richard Geldard