

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TAX ADVISERS



# THE OWL

*AUTUMN 2025 - 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY*

# LETTER FROM THE MASTER MATTHEW PEPPITT



I am honoured to have been elected Master of The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers in the Company's 30th Anniversary year. I joined the Company comparatively late in my career when a friend and colleague invited me to a Livery Carol Service and suggested that I might enjoy what the Company has to offer.

I was very pleased to discover that the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers, and the Livery movement more broadly, add a whole new dimension to a career in tax which is not widely known about and which extends beyond the day job and even into retirement: a network of professional friends at varying stages of their tax career with whom I enjoy the social, charitable and civic life of the City of London. As Dr. Mark Oakley, the Dean of Southwark, put it in his sermon at this year's United Guild's Service, the Livery is all about being good company for each other and for the City. And I'd like that to be the theme for my Master's year.



The Company's year began on 23<sup>rd</sup> September with the Installation Court and the Thanksgiving Service at St. Bartholomew-the-Great. The Installation Dinner afterwards was held at Ironmongers' Hall, London's fantasy Tudor/Jacobean country house near the Barbican built in the 1920s, with Shadow Home Secretary, Chris Philp, was our Guest-of-Honour and musical entertainment came from the Alps.

Plans for the Company's two other milestone events are well advanced: the Budget Banquet on 17<sup>th</sup> March at Stationers' Hall, one of City's surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century livery halls and one of its most beautiful; and the Civic & Charities Lunch on 11<sup>th</sup> June at Bakers' Hall, a modern hall with plenty of history, famous for its historic site near the starting place of the Great Fire and its John Piper stained-glass windows.

An important development for the Company in 2024/25 was our first event delivered with commercial sponsorship when QX Global hosted our 30th Anniversary celebration in The Shard on 8th May this year. QX Global also sponsored the first of a new series of webinars that we have launched to mark our 30th Anniversary. It was held on 20th October and explored the task facing the Chancellor in the Autumn Budget on 26th November. Subsequent webinars will cover other topics weighing heavily on the collective mind of the tax profession. This webinar series represents an expansion of the Company's full program of social activities to include more online events with a professional focus, responding to feedback from members who live outside London or for whom work commitments make joining in-person events difficult. We are exploring a number of other opportunities to bring you further such events in 2025/26.

One of the issues which all Livery companies face is that they are not widely known about or understood. So, this year we are keen to build on our recent outreach efforts to take the message of the Livery and the Company to the wider tax profession. We have made a start with a series of open invitation drinks receptions for people who would like to know about the Company and the Livery and to meet existing members. If you know of a friend or colleague who might be interested in coming along to one of these, please let me know. Anyone with an interest in taxation or a connection to the tax profession is welcome.

A weekend lunch at a vineyard outside London will round off the year next summer.

I look forward to seeing you at one or more of these events in 2025/26.

# 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



## **Celebrating 30 Years of the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers 1995 - 2025: Three Decades of Service, Fellowship, and Professional Excellence**

This year marks a proud milestone in our Company's journey- The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

Founded in 1995 and granted livery status in 2005, the Company has grown from its modest beginnings to become a vibrant and respected part of the City of London. Our mission has always been to uphold the highest standards of tax advice, promote civic duty, and foster fellowship among tax professionals and for 30 years, we've done just that.

Throughout our history, the Company has supported education, encouraged ethical tax practice, and given back through charitable endeavours. From our scholarships and mentoring initiatives to our regular contributions to tax discourse and City life, our members continue to lead with both expertise and integrity.

We are immensely proud of our role in the Livery movement, combining centuries-old traditions with a modern, forward-looking spirit. As we celebrate this 30-year milestone, we also honour the commitment and contributions of our Masters, Clerks, Wardens, and every Liveryman and Freeman who has helped shape our story.

Thank you to all who have been part of the journey so far. Here's to the next chapter in the life of the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers.

Finally, I should like to extend an enormous vote of thanks to Court Assistant Winne Cao. She has worked tirelessly to compile and publish this Autumn 2025 Edition of The Owl - which I very much hope you will enjoy. Thank you Winnie!

# THE IMMEDIATE PAST MASTER'S REPORT

## RICHARD GELDARD



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 30th 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 are exploring further opportunities for 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.

# THE IMMEDIATE PAST MASTER'S REPORT

## RICHARD GELDARD



### **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 Services (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.

### **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.



## Installation Day – Tuesday 23 September 2025

On Tuesday 23rd September 2025, Richard Geldard completed his highly successful year as Master Tax Adviser.

His successor Matthew Peppitt was duly installed as Master for the year 2025/26 at a meeting of Court held at Ironmongers' Hall. Company Wardens for the year were also installed: Caroline Turnbull-Hall as Upper Warden, Howard Ashmore as Middle Warden, and Michael Ashdown as Renter Warden. Richard Geldard accepted Matthew's invitation to serve as his Deputy Master.

The new year also sees Past Master Michael Godbee stepping down from Court after ten years' service, the departure of Assistant Vaughan Robinson (on a potentially temporary basis only), and the admission of Adrian Stevens as a new Court Assistant (with John Whitehead and George Duncan elected to follow suit, once they become available to be admitted at Court). It also saw Middle Warden Howard Ashmore relinquish the appointment of Honorary Treasurer, and confirmation of Assistant Jeremy Coker as his successor.

*Details of Court and Committee members, and other Company officers, are on our website: **The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers | City of London***

The Court meeting also saw eight Freemen advancing to Livery, after gaining their Freedom of the City that morning, and the admission of three new Freemen.

*Photographs from Court, and from throughout the day, are available here: **Gerald Sharp Photography | Tax Advisers***

From Ironmongers' Hall, Court members processed to Great Saint Barts church for a Thanksgiving Service, officiated by the Honorary Chaplain, the Rev Marcus Walker. The Master and Immediate Past Master both delivered readings, the Chaplain his sermon, the Choir several pieces including one from Handel's Messiah, and the congregation hearty renditions of several hymns culminating in 'Guide me, O thou my great Redeemer'. An uplifting start to the new year.

Returning to the Hall and joined by the Rt Hon Chris Philp MP and other Company guests, the new Master hosted his Installation Dinner in the Banqueting Hall. In this wonderful setting, a splendid dinner was served, the Master took wine with new Liverymen and Freemen, Loving Cups were passed, and we were entertained by a highly dramatic, and wonderfully melodic, alphorn duo.

The Renter Warden welcomed and toasted the guests, after which Chris Philp spoke enthusiastically in favour of entrepreneurship and enterprise being afforded a higher priority in political debate and in government policy. The Master closed the dinner by thanking all those involved in its delivery, and he briefly outlined his ethos for the year ahead: Good Company for each other and for the City.

The evening concluded with a convivial Stirrup Cup, and with shared promises to meet again at the Christmas Carol Service and Supper on Tuesday 16th December, if not before.







## **Lobsters, Crémant & Cannons: The Masters' Weekend in Luxembourg**

You know it's going to be a good weekend when, as one of a group of 32 Tax Advisers and partners, you're cracking lobster claws before most people have had their first cup of coffee on Saturday morning. At precisely 9:30am, we found ourselves in Place Guillaume in the centre of Luxembourg tucking into lobsters whilst raising flutes of crémant, the breakfast of champions – or possibly of very confused aristocrats.

The waiter didn't even blink as we tucked into half a lobster, though I'm fairly sure the croissant-eating locals gave us a "tourist" look that translated to "Really? Already?".

Suitably fortified with shellfish and bubbles, we meandered to the City Museum of Luxembourg. It's an architectural delight, a multi-level exploration of the city's past, where you descend through a glass elevator into centuries of history.

One highlight was learning that the city once had 13 Trade Guilds, selling their wares to the garrison stationed at the fortress. Bakers, butchers, cobblers - all thriving off the steady business of soldiers. Trading Guilds... sound familiar?

Next came our three-hour walking tour, which felt like a blend of history lesson, treasure hunt, and cardio session. The city's streets are charmingly hilly, the views outrageously photogenic, and just as our legs were about to stage a protest, our guide whisked us into the Notre-Dame Cathedral. There, in a stroke of perfect timing, we found ourselves witnessing an actual wedding. Indeed, nothing quite says "authentic travel experience" as being invited to join the congregation of a traditional Catholic Mass ceremony.

Further along, we reached the ominously named "Hell's Gate." Far from being an underworld portal, it was in fact where locals once had to pay their taxes before entering the city. Proof, if ever it was needed, that paying taxes has always felt a little bit hellish.

The afternoon's grand finale was a descent into the Casemates du Bock, Luxembourg's legendary underground fortifications. Imagine a labyrinth of stone tunnels, cannon placements, and echoes of battles past. Our guide recounted how the Luxembourgers' 82-year-old General once held off the French for eight months from within the walls. Eight months! We tried to picture it: no daylight, constant gunfire, and no lobster for breakfast!

Luxembourg is a small country, taking 90 minutes to drive from north to south and half that time from east to west. However it has always been at the centre of Europe and its prominent position has earned it the name of "the Gibraltar of the North", although without the monkeys!

By the time the tour ended, we were happily exhausted: full of history, seafood and sparkling wine. Luxembourg City proved itself a delightful paradox – equal parts refined elegance and gritty fortitude. Where else could you breakfast like royalty, gate-crash a wedding, visit "Hell's Gate," and finish the day deep in a fortress that once stared down the French?

In the evening we ate at Café Francais in an upstairs room overlooking the main square. After another glass of crémant and canapes, we ate a local speciality, Judd mat Gaardebounen - pork/ham collar with broad beans and potatoes, delicious.

But the adventure didn't end there. On Sunday, we stepped back in time and boarded a beautifully restored 1950's coach painted in cream and green with wide panoramic windows that curved up into the roof. With its chrome details gleaming in the sunshine and its plush interior lined with curtains, it felt like travelling in a moving piece of history – equal parts vintage luxury and nostalgic charm. The gentle rumble of the engine, and traditional Luxembourgish tunes, carried us through the rolling Luxembourg countryside, past vineyards and villages, until we reached the picturesque Moselle Valley.

Our destination was the village of Ahn, near the German border, where we visited the vineyard of Max-Lahr et Fils now run by the seventh generation of the family. Nestled on the banks of the river, the estate offered sweeping views and, more importantly, crisp glasses of Elbling, Rivaner, Auxerrois and Riesling (plus, of course, crémant – are you starting to see a common theme?) which reminded us that Luxembourg's finest defences aren't just stone walls and cannons, but also well-stocked wine cellars.

After a visit to the wine cellar and a walk to see the vines growing, we enjoyed a sumptuous buffet lunch before returning to Luxembourg for our return to the UK.

And the best part? This was all part of The Master's Weekend – a celebration that manages to combine fellowship, tradition and just a touch of luxury in truly memorable fashion.

If you get the chance, I would heartily recommend making it your next big adventure. Mark the calendar for next year – you won't regret it.

Liveryman Adam Taylor (with contributions from Liveryman James Carr and the Master)





## **Carol Service and Supper: December 2024**

On Tuesday 17th December, the Company was joined by Actuaries, Butchers, Communicators, Farmers, Fletchers, Founders, and Hackney Carriage Drivers, for the annual Inter-Livery Carol Service at the Church of Saint Bartholomew the Great.

The Service was a delight, as ever, and the atmosphere magnificent. From the Carol Service, a short walk to Supper at Butchers' Hall, where a strong cohort from the Company – joined by other Companies again – filled the Great Hall to capacity, with festive cheer and bonhomie.

The evening concluded with the Master's well-chosen (few) words, and mutual good wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



## **Budget Banquet: March 2025**

The Company's annual Budget Banquet was held in the thoroughly splendid surroundings of Mercers' Hall on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March.

More than 150 Liverymen, Freemen, their guests, and guests of the Company gathered to enjoy a welcoming Drinks Reception in the Court Dining Room and a wonderful Dinner in the Livery Hall. After Dinner, Evie Hill and her fellow musicians from the Guildhall School of Music provided a superb and soulful jazz performance.

We were honoured to have Sir Jim Harra KCB as our guest of honour. Jim provided fascinating reflections on his four decades with the (now) HMRC, including more than five years at the helm. Excellent speeches were also delivered by Caroline Turnbull-Hall, as Middle Warden introducing the guests, and Richard Geldard, the Master.

Earlier in the day, ten new Liverymen were advanced and three new Freemen were admitted at Court, including Paul Johnson CBE who became an Honorary Freeman.



## Civic and Charities Luncheon: June 2025

The Company held its Civic and Charities Luncheon at Tallow Chandlers' Hall on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June.

After drinks in the Hall's fine Courtyard and luncheon in the splendid Dining Room, it was time to recognise our civic and charitable connections and endeavours.

The Upper Warden, Matthew Peppitt, spoke engagingly about the Company's guests representing TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People, City Harvest, Mulberry University Technical College, and the Guild of Freeman. He welcomed our guest of honour, Sheriff David Chalk, and Consort Miranda Chalk.

The Sheriff replied, on behalf of the guests, with an amusing account of his tenure thus far and provided some valuable insights into the stature and value attributed to the Company by the Mayor, the Corporation, the Livery, and the City more broadly.

The Master, Richard Geldard, concluded by presenting, to the Sheriff, donations to the Lord Mayor's Appeal, Mansion House Scholarship Fund, and the Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund, and to the CEOs of TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People, and City Harvest, donations to their respective charities.



## Court Dinner: July 2025

This year's Court Dinner was held in the elegant surroundings of Coopers' Hall in Devonshire Square, on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> July.

The Master, Richard Geldard, presided over a friendly and enjoyable gathering of twenty-five Wardens, Court Assistants, Past Masters, and guests.

Grace by Past Master Erica Stary, and warm words of welcome from the Master, were followed by trout, duck, and pudding - interspersed with spirited conversations around the Company's eventful year.



# LORD MAYOR'S SHOW NOVEMBER 2024



As I made my way to Ironmongers' Hall, it began to hit home just how big an event I was about to become a part of. As marching bands practised around Smithfield Market, and floats lined Aldersgate Street and London Wall, the sheer size of the Lord Mayor's Show became all too apparent. What had I let myself in for?

When the invitation went out for Liverymen wishing to join the Master, Middle Warden, and Renter Warden on the parade, I did not hesitate to put my hand up. Who knows when such an opportunity might come up again, and I am a firm believer in always saying yes when these things do appear. And so, there I was at 9am on an overcast Saturday morning, meeting up at Ironmongers' Hall for a quick bacon sandwich, putting on my Livery robe, and joining the world's largest, unrehearsed procession to welcome the new Lord Mayor, Alastair King.

Having only previously watched the parade on television, it seemed much bigger, brighter, and louder, in reality. The 1.5-mile route from Mansion House through Cheapside, passing St Paul's and onto Fleet Street, was full of people cheering, waving, and clapping. Shortly after 11am, we joined the procession, along with other modern livery companies. There was something rather surreal about walking around the familiar corner at Bank junction to see BBC TV cameras trained on us, broadcasting around the world to an audience of millions. And I'm pleased to say we got some of our own airtime, with the Tax Advisers being specifically mentioned in the commentary.

Once at the Royal Courts, and as we waited for the parade to reset for the return leg, we enjoyed lunch and a drink aboard HMS Wellington, kindly arranged by The Worshipful Company of Firefighters. After not too many beverages, we made the returned along Embankment and Victoria Street, eventually to Mansion House.

Taking part in the Lord Mayor's Show was an amazing experience. I thoroughly recommend it to anyone who gets the opportunity to join in future ... perhaps next year?

**By Liveryman Tom Wallace**



# ANNUAL PANCAKE RACE FEBRUARY 2025



On Shrove Tuesday we gathered in the Guildhall Yard to take part in the annual Pancake Race, organised by the Worshipful Company of Poulterers. It was a glorious sunny day, and the proceedings were set off by a very loud cannon shot from a very small cannon.

The Tax Advisers fielded four contestants, Master Richard Geldard in the Master's Race, Howard Ashmore running for the Liveryman, Karen McNicholls for the Ladies Race and finally Adam Taylor ran in the Novelty Race. Everyone except the Novelty runners had to race in their gowns, gloves and chef's hat carrying a very heavy pan containing a pancake which had to be tossed twice. The Novelty Race runners had to wear a costume which either reflected the Lord Mayor's chosen charity, A Better City for All, or their own Company. Our Adam dressed as the famous VAT case which decided whether Jaffa cakes were cakes or biscuits: they remained cakes! Alas, Adam did not win but there was a great deal of competition with some very elaborate costumes, some of which made it almost impossible to run. Costumes included a sky scraper, a bee keeper and a chest of drawers but the winner was Sir Knit-A-Lot of the Framework Knitters who was dressed up as a knight in a skein of wool with two knitting needles on his chest.

We made a very good showing with three of us winning their heats (is this a record?) and Karen qualified for the Ladies final where she finished an excellent third. We look forward to further progress next year. We then enjoyed a buffer lunch in the Crypt where we were joined by several other Company members.

**By Liveryman Alison Lovejoy**





## MASTER

Matthew Peppitt

## DEPUTY MASTER

\*Richard Geldard

## UPPER WARDEN

Caroline Turnbull-Hall

## MIDDLE WARDEN

Howard Ashmore

## RENTER WARDEN

Michael Ashdown

## COURT ASSISTANTS

\*Anthony Thomas

\*Kevin Thomas

\*Morag Loader

\*Marcus Fincham

\*Paul Morton

\*Sue Christensen

\*Mike Gibbons MBE

Nicolas Kokkinos

Lorraine Parkin

Stephen Hodgson

Alan McLintock

Kevin Offer

Winnie Cao

Jeremy Coker

Adrian Stevens

George Duncan (to be admitted  
on or after 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025)

John Whitehead (to be admitted  
on or after 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025)

## HONORARY COURT ASSISTANTS

Andrew Gillett

James Dixon

## HONORARY COURT SECRETARY

\*Clive Tulloch

\* **indicates a Past Master**

## TREASURER

Jeremy Coker

## HONORARY ALMONER

George Duncan

## HONORARY CHAPLAIN

The Reverend Marcus Walker

## CLERK

Robert Lowth CBE

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Carolyn Finch

## WEBSITE COORDINATOR

Nicolas Kokkinos

## BEADLE

Michael Myers

# HISTORY OF TAX GROUP

## MORAG LOADER, CHAIR



We held our two regular sessions during the Company year, one in October and one in February.

**29 October 2024:** A History of tax avoidance - an overview from pre-history to the present day with David Goldberg KC.

Starting with taxes in ancient Egypt, David's talk brought us up to date with a review of the last 50 years of tax avoidance cases, demonstrating how the UK courts have evolved their approach from a strict legal interpretation to a looser one like that adopted by the US courts in the 1940s, reaching instinctive conclusions based on morality. As the approach taken by the courts changed over time, the approach of the legislature also changed, with an increasing focus on targeted anti avoidance measures.

Following David's excellent talk, we repaired to The Fox and Anchor for supper.



**18 February 2025:** Glass Tax Magnified with Liveryman Carrie de Silva

Glass tax was in force between 1746 and 1845 and was a consequence of war, as it was first imposed by the National Debt Act 1745 introduced during the War of the Austrian Succession. Initially the tax was levied on raw materials, but later it was imposed on finished products, and Carrie illustrated the unintended consequences that the tax had on both the industry and the use of glass. The talk also included an insight into the development of the Irish glass industry of which Waterford is a survivor.

After her excellent presentation we once again repaired to The Fox and Anchor for supper.





## **HMS Bangor – Upper Warden Caroline Turnbull-Hall**

Our affiliation with HMS Bangor began whilst we were still a Guild and was originally the province of Past Master Iain Stitt, himself a former serving Royal Navy Commander.

The Company is delighted to maintain its links with HMS Bangor, albeit at a distance as she has been in Bahrain for some time now.

The past year or so has not been easy for Bangor, as she has been hit twice by other ships (USS Gladiator and HMS Chiddingfold) when in harbour in Bahrain. The second collision (or allision, as she was stationary) caused significant damage to her port side. Luckily there were no injuries, and the damage was above the waterline, but nonetheless she has spent much of the past year being repaired. Earlier this year we heard that repairs were progressing well and understand that the ship is now back in the water ready for operations.

In September we were delighted to welcome Lt Commander Sam Velickovic, CO of Crew 10, to the Installation Dinner, before he and Crew 10 returned to the Gulf to start their next tour of duty, relieving Lt Commander Will Durbin CO of Crew 9. Sam has now left Bangor for another posting and we wish him well in his new role and of course wish Will well as he is currently CO of both Crews 9 and 10.

This calendar year we have awarded two prizes to outstanding crew members. From Crew 10 Warrant Officer (Second class) Wesley Blackwell and from Crew 9 Leading Engineer Technician (Marine Engineering) James Hood.

Whilst it was expected that Bangor would be decommissioned in 2025, it now looks as if these plans may have been abandoned, and she will be extended in service for longer. We are delighted as we value our association with the ship and wish her fair winds over the next few months.

## **101 Squadron RAF – Court Assistant Adrian Stevens**

The Master & I were invited to the annual formal reception at RAF Brize Norton on 17 June 2025 as guests of 101 Sqn. The event was hosted by the base commanding officer Group Captain Louise Henton.

Guests enjoyed a display by the RAF Parachute Display Team (the Falcons) and a sunset ceremony with a flypast by an A400M Atlas.



The company were also invited to a 101 Sqn air to air refuelling experience flight from Brize Norton on 18 June but this was cancelled at the last minute due to operational commitments.

The members that remained on the base were treated to a visit to the Air Tanker hanger where they had the opportunity to view an Airbus A330 Voyager tanker undergoing a heavy maintenance check - a very rare sight.

Officer commanding 101 Sqn, Paul Summers, also provided a brief presentation about the squadron's activities. After the presentation the Master presented Paul with a donation.

Paul Summers tenure as officer commanding 101 Sqn will come to an end this September and we wish Paul, and his successor, well for the future.





## Adjutant Generals Corps – Past Master Marcus Fincham

Since 2018 the WCTA has been affiliated with the Management Accountancy Services (Army) part of the Adjutant General's Corps. Here are the latest from the team.

13 members of MAS(A), and 10 civilian accountants from across Army, went to the Government Finance Conference in Liverpool on 4-5 Feb 2025, to join circa 1,500 public sector finance professionals discussing key trends and developments affecting their work. Greatest focus was on harnessing data and leveraging AI to drive efficiency and improve insight underpinning decision making.

We have a project accountant working on the cost model for Armed Forces recruiting. The Army outsourced to Capita previously, but this new contract brings in the Royal Navy and RAF and has just been awarded to a consortium led by Serco.

We have another supporting the central Defence Reform programme. The SoS this week announced the first stage of the plan, with major restructuring to how the MOD works, setting up 4 key areas: a Department of State led by the Permanent Secretary; a Military Strategic headquarter, led by Chief of the Defence staff with the individual Service Chiefs directly subordinate; a National Armaments Director who will lead on all major capital investments across infrastructure, equipment and digital and relationships with industry; and Defence Nuclear. This will reduce the MOD budget into 4x Top-Level Budget (TLB) areas, the Army will no longer be a TLB in its own right, with the SoS stating publicly he will "end" the Lord Levine reforms of 2012 which saw greater delegation to Front Line Commands of the their integrated budgets.

MAS(A) is supporting Army to understand how it might adapt its Operating Model (budgeting, investing, approving, governance, reporting). Beyond that, internal training session was run to develop our accountants' writing skills, particularly to make the report accompanying their cost model tell a compelling story articulating decision space and relevant evidence, rather than just a narrative of cost study approach. A 2-day ESG themed training was delivered in March, in support of work several of our team are conducting about how the Army and MOD reports carbon across our activities and supply chain, and further how it can properly consider carbon and other ESG factors into investment decisions.



## **Army Cadet Force – Past Master Marcus Fincham**

The WCTA is affiliated with the City of London and North-East Sector Army Cadet Force (ACF / COLNES).

This year was our first year of our Lucas Tooth competition – a mandatory entry for each detachment which awards points for each and every qualification gained, course attended and community service. Our first ever winners were 22 Cadet Detachment RRF, who stormed to victory.

We held three 'Annual Camps', one at Whipps Cross for our basics, an Easter joint camp and a week in Pirbright attended by over 400 individual cadets. Finally, we have completed phase one of the redesign of Whipps Cross HQ and Cadet Training Centre, including the installation of 6 new showers and refurbishment of one other to increase bed spaces at the centre from 76 to 96 as we stand. Phase 2 will see us move from 96 to 110 and the installation of 3 new offices and a shared kitchen facility, and finally phase 3 (2027) will see us move to 150. The site is used more and more now as army camps around the country, and access to training areas is severely restricted so our effort must continue to go into developing our own cadet training centre to be fit for purpose and suitable.

We were also awarded the most improved county in the country for the Duke of Edinburgh Award – a huge increase made possible by all the support from liveries such as yourselves but also from the fantastic hard work of our volunteers.

In some sadder news, we were devastated at the sudden loss of Lieutenant Sophie Gibbs, our vocational qualifications officer who sadly passed away in a car accident in May 2024. We also lost, Major Erik Crichton who has a long standing (1986 till 2017) 4 Company OC but also Sector Training Officer and retired a few years back.





## **Livery Climate Action Group**

The Livery Climate Action Group was formed in 2021 to assist the City of London Livery Companies and Guilds to manage their impact on climate change and the environment by making responsible use of resources. Led energetically by Alderman Alison Gowman CBE there are now more than 100 Livery Companies involved.

The summer newsletter is available on their website at [info@liverycag.org.uk](mailto:info@liverycag.org.uk)

Member Companies are encouraged to write their own Strategic Plan to examine how they might be able to set themselves targets to transition to net zero, in particular with reference to their investments, food waste, transport and many other areas.

This year the annual conference will be on 26th January 2026 at Merchant Taylors' Hall. The group also provides educational materials for Companies liaising with schools and other outreach activities and there is also now a YouTube channel for anyone wishing to look further and see where they might get involved.

As a member company of this Pan Livery movement WCTA needs to prepare its own Strategic Plan and for this we need willing helpers, so if you are interested in becoming part of our team please email our clerk and volunteer - you will be most welcome to assist the Company with this challenging endeavour.

## **Pollinating London Together**

PLT is a Pan livery initiative set up to halt the decline of pollinators in the City of London and its environs. Over the last 20 years flying pollinator numbers have fallen by 80% which needs an urgent reversal.

Set up in 2019, the group organises a comprehensive annual programme of events bringing together PLT members, schools, community groups and the public.

Our Past Tax Mistress, Dame Fiona Woolf, is a patron, and the committee boasts a number of specialists, the chair being Wax Chandler John Burton, and vice -chair past Master Gardener Heather Barrett- Mold OBE.

This autumn Past Master Security Professional and committee member Steve Emmins will swim 6 miles around the Serpentine to raise funds for research. You can sponsor him and discover more about the PLT at [www.pollinatinglondontogther.com](http://www.pollinatinglondontogther.com)

**By Past Master Sue Christensen**

# SOCIAL COMMITTEE

## COURT ASSISTANT ALAN MCLINTOCK



The Social Committee plays an important part in the life of the Company – by delivering events for members it ensures fellowship, part of the Company's motto and one of its key aims. The Committee is responsible for all social events, other than the two annual banquets, the Civic and Charities Lunch, the History of Tax events, and coordinates support and teams for inter-livery events.

We are always happy to have new members join the Social Committee, so if you think this might be for you then please reach out (we even have a job description showing what is entailed). There is lots of help available so don't think you will be thrown in at the deep end.

Following the Company wide questionnaire on social events, we have adjusted our events to try and widen the number of members who can attend. We aim to deliver at least one online event a year where travel is not a barrier (and our Spies and Spy Masters virtual tour in May was very highly rated by those that attended) and at least one weekend event (Sunday lunch at The Clink in HMP Brixton this September).

We also welcome any guests you wish to bring to the events. For those of you attending by yourself, the groups are typically a mix of small groups and members attending by themselves. Our events are very friendly and open where you will find companionship. Our flyers now include the following wording to emphasis this:

*Thinking of coming along by yourself? Please do.  
Fellowship is a key part of our Company ethos. Many of our social events are attended  
by small groups or individual members, some of whom have never met before.  
Come along and enjoy a welcoming and friendly evening out.*

In planning events, we have a range of different relationships with the event provider and our members. For some events, the Company buys in the event either on a per person price or a fixed price and resells that event to its members on a per head basis. As the Company is VAT registered, this arrangement works best where the event supplier is VAT registered and charges VAT as the Company can recover any purchase VAT. For other events, this works out less well where the event supplier is not VAT registered but the Company still has to uplift the price by 20% VAT if it acts as reseller. In yet other cases, the event may not lend itself to the Company buying in and selling on (e.g. events such as some theatres need to be individually booked and paid online). What it means is that in some cases, the Company does not supply the event to you but acts as your agent in facilitating your direct purchase from the event organiser and ensuring we attend as a group. Pre or post event meals or coffee and cake is typically also on a self-pay basis. The event flyer will always make it clear on what basis the event is being organised but should make no difference to your enjoyment on the day (or evening).

The Social Committee plan a range of events at different prices but generally attempt to make events as accessible as possible. Some inter livery events can cost hundreds of pounds and it is probably fair to say that only a small percentage of our members might be interested in such events. The Company typically does not add a handling fee or mark up to Social Committee events but does price to minimise the risk of a loss. So, a fixed fee of £200 for a non-VAT registered guided tour might be priced based on nine people attending @£27 (incl VAT) pp with a small surplus for the Company should more than nine people attend the event (and a deficit should less than 9 people attend).

# SOCIAL COMMITTEE

## COURT ASSISTANT ALAN MCLINTOCK



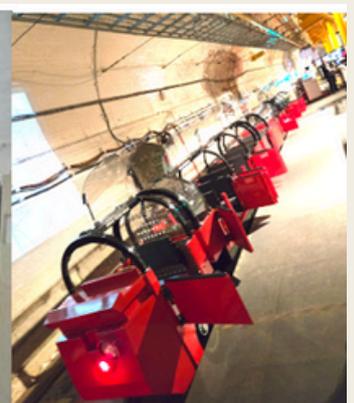
Over the past year there has been an interesting programme of events and members have also had the chance to participate in several City and inter-livery events. Events organised by the Social Committee have included a private guided tour of The British Museum, our regular lunch at the Ironmongers and this year a special Master's lunch at The Company of Watermen and Lightermen, an evening visit to the Bank of England museum, a virtual guided tour (Spies and Spymasters), a weekday lunch at The Clink in HMP Brixton (fantastic food and a great experience) and a trip to the Post Office Museum (the highlight being the ride on the original mail train that transported mail across London).

As ever there have been a wide range of inter-livery events over the past year, and the Committee has encouraged members to participate wherever possible. These have included the very successful inter-livery quiz hosted by the Social Committee, the annual Pancake race at Guildhall (where our team did much better than in previous years), a guided tour, cocktails on the deck and dinner in Bristol aboard SS Great Britain was enjoyed by 23 of our members and guests as well as many other events attended by small teams (such as bridge and shooting). The forthcoming ever popular Sheep Drive celebrating a Freeman's ancient "right" to bring sheep to market over the Thames, toll free is hosted by The Worshipful Company of Woolmen in September. The popular inter-livery events (outside of the Sheep Drive and Pancake Race) tend to be Shooting, Pétanque, Golf, Croquet and Bridge. So, if you are interested in knowing when these events come along, let us know.

The Company also supports many of the City of London events. We support the Lord Mayors Show and march in the procession (come along and support us on the 8th of November, lunches are planned, and the procession itself is not to be missed). City Giving Day is also heavily supported by the Company with members attending the quiz and guided tour. A variety of one-off charitable lunches are attended by the Master or other members of the Company.

Please do let the Committee know if there are any events that you would like to attend, and ideally that you would be happy to organise. The Committee is working on the social programme for the forthcoming year and has several activities planned in addition to the usual City and inter-livery events.

Many thanks to all of those on the Social Committee for their commitment to the Company over the past year.



# CHARITIES COMMITTEE

## COURT ASSISTANT LORRAINE PARKIN, CHAIR



The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers has three primary aims. One of these aims is to support and fund benevolent and charitable causes. Two Charities were set up to fulfil this aim: The Tax Advisers' Benevolent Fund and The Tax Advisers' Charitable Trust. The Trustee of both is the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers, which delegates the day-to-day running of our charities to the Charities' Committee.

I find it extremely rewarding to have the honour to chair our Charities' Committee. I think one of the most important things the members of our Company do is to give both time and money to improve lives. It can be transformative, both for the recipient and the donor. Following on from the article I wrote for *The Owl* last year, let me tell you about both of our charities and share some of the things that they have been doing in 2024/2025.

### **Tax Advisers' Benevolent Fund (TABF)** **Registered Charity No. 1064392**

The primary objective of the Benevolent Fund is to relieve hardship. Past and present members of the Chartered Institute of Taxation (CIOT) and the Association of Taxation Technicians (ATT) are eligible to apply to the Fund. This also extends to the wives, husbands, widows, widowers, children or dependents. In our previous financial year to 30 June 2024 we did not receive any hardship applications. We hoped that this meant that all eligible tax practitioners and their dependents were doing well. However, we took a decision that we did want to ensure that everyone who might be eligible to make an application is aware that the fund exists, as we were concerned that this might not be the case. Therefore, with the generous support of the CIOT and the ATT we embarked on an advertising campaign in 2025. In particular, an advertisement was placed in the February 2025 edition of *Tax Adviser* and a short film was made that is being shown at various ATT and CIOT branch meetings and events. The film can be found on the CIOT's website too. Since launching this campaign we have been receiving hardship applications throughout 2025, which suggests that our communication plan is working.

In addition to its primary objective the Benevolent Fund has a general clause in its Trust Deed. Under this clause, and with reference to its Policies, the Fund also gives means-tested grants and bursaries to students of the ATT and the CIOT who are studying for their professional exams. This includes the ATT, the CTA, the DITT and the ADIT qualifications. Under its current Policies, TABF restricts the grants and donations made under this general clause to tax-related education. I'm pleased to say that this includes educating school children and university students on matters relating to taxation.

The TABF is deeply committed to the furtherance of tax education. If a prospective candidate is unable to obtain financial support from an employer and cannot personally afford the cost, an application can be made to the TABF for financial support. In the case of the ATT and CTA qualifications, the TABF will fund registration fees, course fees and exam fees, following an assessment of the candidate's personal financial status, which is undertaken by our Almoner. Generally the funding is provided on a module-by-module basis. Mentoring is also offered for CIOT candidates (the ATT has its own mentoring programme) as we have a vested interest in seeing our candidates succeed. Looking at the financial year to June 2025 I am pleased to report that we have had a number of candidates qualify with the ATT or part qualify towards both the ATT and CTA qualifications. We have continued to support the on-going studies of a number of candidates during 2025 and have a steady stream of applicants.

# CHARITIES COMMITTEE

## COURT ASSISTANT LORRAINE PARKIN, CHAIR



Every year the TABF provides at least 3 bursaries of £1,500 towards the Advance Diploma in International Taxation (ADIT) qualification to applicants who are resident abroad. We work closely with the CIOT who recommends candidates to the TABF for consideration and approval. Recently we have been supporting six bursary winners.

In November 2022 the CIOT launched the Diploma in Tax Technology (DITT.). The changing landscape of tax is underpinned by technology advancements. While digitalisation has many benefits, tax professionals need to keep on top of tax technology developments to avoid being left behind. The TABF was delighted to be able to step forward to offer 3 Bursaries for those eligible and wanting to study the DITT in 2024 and has offered 4 Bursaries in 2025. The Bursaries will support members of the CIOT and the ATT, who have been on a career break for a minimum of one year and who would like to pursue the DITT qualification to help them re-enter the profession but who would suffer financial hardship to do so.

In 2025 the TABF has also committed to supporting the CIOT's Return to Work programme for 3 years. Again, this is providing financial support to those re entering the tax career market.

We take the protection of personal data very seriously so all applicants for all qualifications supported are allocated a case number to protect their identity. Please see various comments sent to us in writing by some of this year's successful applicants:

**"The support is immensely appreciated." S257.21**

**"Thank you so much for this wonderful news. I'm truly delighted and deeply grateful for the committee's decision to support my studies." S286.25**

**"As a single mum I would not be able to afford these studies so I can't express how this helps me build a better life for my autistic daughter and myself." M47.24**

**"It is going to make a massive difference to us and my training so thank you." S285.25**

The TABF promotes the study of the administration and practice of taxation. This includes helping young people in education become aware that there are many possible careers in the field of taxation. For 3 years now, partnered by the CIOT, the Company and its charities has run a stand at the London Careers Festival, during the Livery Schools' Links days, to showcase tax as a career. Several of our members volunteered to staff the stand along with members and staff of the CIOT. We connected with thousands of London's secondary school children, inspiring them with interactive exercises and tax related mementos. This year, 2025, we also ran a stand for primary school children. They were particularly captivated by the Marshmallows and the Jaffa cakes that we had on our stand!

Liz Goodwin, Chairman of the LSL kindly provided us with some feedback:

**"Can I also thank the [Worshipful Company of] Tax Advisers and the [Chartered] Institute of Taxation for the excellent stall that you had at the Showcase. Anything that helps financial literacy is really important for young people whether or not they decide it is a possible career in the future,"**

# CHARITIES COMMITTEE COURT ASSISTANT LORRAINE PARKIN, CHAIR



Together the CIOT, the ATT and WCTA also had a stall and presented at the inaugural Financial Service Group Livery Companies Student Event in April, this year partnering with upReach. We also developed a new Tax Careers Flyer for this event and we handed out complimentary packs of our bespoke 30th anniversary playing cards, as it is the Company and its charities 30th anniversary this year.



The target audience was 50 university students, from across the country who went to state schools, achieved at least 3 Bs at A level and come from low socioeconomic backgrounds where the annual household income is less than £42,620. Often these students do not have a clear pathway into professional careers and, in particular, careers in taxation and yet they would add so much to our profession. The engagement on the day was awesome, as were our volunteers.



Indeed, my heartfelt thanks goes to all of our members and members and employees of the CIOT and ATT who have been involved in the London Careers Festival and the inaugural FSG Student Day. In particular, members of the Education-Sub-Committee have put enormous effort into these events.

The Tax Advisers' Benevolent Fund is reliant on bequests, legacies, grants from the CIOT and the ATT, the generosity of members of the WCTA, occasional one off donations from the public, and income from its investments. At the time of writing we are still finalizing our accounts with our auditors but based on draft accounts I can share with you that in the financial year to 30 June 2025 TABF received donations of £26,777, a £6,000 increase on 2024. It also had income from investments of £21,396, giving it a total income of £48,173. It paid out grants of £ 36,999 in the year and incurred costs of approximately £8,500 on investment management fees, auditors' remuneration, bank fees, insurance, postage and merchandise. The small surplus will be carried forward and, combined with the Fund's investments, and income derived from those investments, provides resources for future years when the Fund may have heavier calls for grants from eligible persons.

You may already be donating to TABF as all Freeman and Liverymen promise to support our charities when being sworn into the Company but if you are not and you wish to make a regular or one off donation details of its bank account are as follows: Tax Advisers' Benevolent Fund, Barclays, Account Number 33045218, Sort Code 20-41-50.

Gift Aid forms can be downloaded from our website: <https://www.taxadvisers.org.uk>

The Trustee of TABF is also keen to encourage members to consider legacies in their wills and living legacies, which have the benefit of being potentially eligible for Gift Aid. The use to which the legacy or living legacy is put can also be determined if desired. For further information please go to our website or contact either Bill Dodwell or me.

# CHARITIES COMMITTEE

## COURT ASSISTANT LORRAINE PARKIN, CHAIR

### **Tax Advisers' Charitable Trust (TACT)** **Registered Charity No.1064392**

The Tax Advisers' Charitable Trust is a general charitable fund that supports a number of City and Greater London causes, including education and the preservation of tax history. TACT seeks to support causes that make London a better place in which to live and work and to visit. To this end, TACT's income is used to support TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People, The Lord Mayor's Appeal, the Mansion House Scholarship Fund, the Sheriff's & Recorder's Fund, the Hackney Carriage Drivers' Children's Magical Taxi Tour, the Livery Food Initiative and City Harvest, London Air Ambulance, St.John Ambulance, Mulberry UTC, Treloars, The Guildhall School of Music, various cadet forces and many more. I've highlighted a few of the causes we have been supporting this year.

Under its Policies 50% of TACT's donation income supports charities that provide tax advice to people who need it but cannot afford to instruct professional firms of advisers. Specifically, this includes supporting TaxAid and Tax Help for Older People. These charities, which have recently announced their merger, provide free, independent, expert help and advice for older people, 60+, and younger people on low incomes who cannot afford to pay professional advisory fees or who are self-employed. We were delighted that Valerie Boggs, CEO of both charities, joined us to receive cheques at our Civic & Charities Luncheon in June 2025.

The Civic & Charities Luncheon is one of the Company's key annual events. It's where we celebrate our links with the City and where we recognise our charitable endeavours. This year we were delighted to host Alderman David Chalk and his consort, who were representing the Lord Mayor. We gave David donations for The Sheriffs' and Recorders' Fund, The Lord Mayor's Appeal and the Mansion House Scholarship Fund. These funds do a variety of things but, in particular The Sheriffs' and Recorders' Fund helps former prisoners establish themselves in the workforce, while the Mansion House Scholarship Scheme brings the brightest students in the world, who are likely to be future world leaders or influencers, into UK universities for post graduate studies and develops their relationship with London and the UK.



**The Livery Food Initiative** is a Livery wide initiative to support City Harvest, a food redistribution charity. They take high quality food, which is about to go to waste, from farms, manufacturers and retailers and redistribute it to charities throughout London. We are honoured to be supporting both the Livery Van and the Livery Lorry. Funds were raised for each one respectively in 2023/24 and 2024/25. Although we are not in it for the glory, for the second year running we were pleased to receive an award for our contribution to the former, collected by Renter Warden and Treasurer, Howard Ashmore. You can find our awards in our glass cabinet on the first floor of the Information Technologist's Hall.

In 2024/2025 we've been supporting City Harvest in setting up a further distribution hub in New Covent Garden. This is a great place for them to be situated as a significant proportion of London's quality fresh food comes through New Covent Garden and City Harvest's Food Team has built up relations with the traders in order that they receive surplus food for redistribution to their beneficiaries. I had the privilege of spending an early morning onsite on 10 April to be shown around their new food collection and distribution facility. It was a fascinating morning.

I made this plea last year and I'll make it again, if anyone reading this article has connections with farmers or food manufacturers, who have excess production from time to time, please introduce them to me as we can put them in touch with City Harvest.



# CHARITIES COMMITTEE

## COURT ASSISTANT LORRAINE PARKIN, CHAIR



London Air Ambulance was founded in 1989 to provide rapid emergency care to save the lives of critically injured people in London. We are proud to be able to support both the day-to-day operations of the London Air Ambulance and we were proud to support its Up Against Time appeal. The LAA successfully raised funds to replace two of its helicopters. These took off for the first time in October 2024. Unfortunately, they did not take off on the night of the "launch" reception, which I attended with crew and their donors, as the weather was too bad!



Based on draft figures at the time of writing, in the financial year to 30 June 2025 the donations received by TACT were £38,571, including a £5,000 legacy. This was circa £13,000 more than 2024. Combined with income derived from TACT's investments and merchandise TACT had a total income of £48,632. Grants were made of £28,333 and costs were incurred of approximately £3,500 on investment management fees, auditors' remuneration, bank fees, insurance and postage. The surplus will be carried forward and, combined with the Fund's investments, and income derived from those investments, this increases resources to make further grants for future years.

Many members of the Company honour their pledge and are already donating to TACT but if you are not and you wish to make a regular or one off donation details of its bank account are as follows: Tax Advisers' Charitable Trust, HSBC, Account Number 01134493, Sort Code 40-03-17.

Gift Aid forms can be downloaded from our website: <https://www.taxadvisers.org.uk>



This year has seen a welcome rise in our overall income, largely thanks to a lively programme of events. Highlights included the Budget Banquet and the Installation Dinner, both of which drew excellent support.

Membership contributions, through quarterage, remain the backbone of our finances. Alongside this, our events continue to provide valuable additional income.

One challenge has been the sharp increase in catering costs for formal dinners. We monitor our expenditure closely and have sought savings wherever possible, but it has been necessary to adjust ticket prices for our major functions. As part of our cost-saving efforts, we have also agreed with our Clerk to reduce his working time by one day each week.

The encouraging news is that we are moving in the right direction. Income is growing, events are thriving, and losses are reducing year by year. With continued support from members and careful management of costs, we are on course to move steadily towards a balanced budget in the years ahead.

Above all, these results reflect the strength of our fellowship, the success of our events, and the commitment of members to sustaining the life of our Company.

# MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

## RENTER WARDEN MICHAEL ASHDOWN, CHAIR



Our committee members continue to play a vital role in overseeing and managing the recruitment, admission, and retention of members. Below is a summary of our current priorities and responsibilities:

### **1) Recruitment**

The committee identifies potential members, including tax advisers, accountants, lawyers, and academics.

Our most effective recruitment tool remains our existing members. Please support us by encouraging colleagues and friends to join our livery company. Remember there is an incentive for introducing a new member, if you introduce a new member you can claim a free additional place at a Company event.

Looking ahead, we will also explore new ways of engaging with younger professionals and students at the start of their careers, ensuring that our Company remains vibrant, diverse, and future-facing.

### **2) Outreach Initiatives**

We actively promote the benefits of membership through outreach programmes, including hosting events, giving presentations, and engaging with professional networks.

In 2026, we aim to strengthen ties with the CIOT and other professional bodies as well as other livery companies to raise awareness of our mission and values.

### **3) Membership Applications**

The committee manages the application process, reviewing and assessing candidates to ensure they reflect our company's values and standards.

We continue to uphold a high standard of professional and personal integrity, ensuring that our membership represents the very best of the tax profession.

### **4) Engagement, Retention and Progression**

We are committed to integrating new members effectively and maintaining high levels of engagement and satisfaction through professional development and social opportunities.

For those wishing to progress from Freeman to Liveryman, the committee oversees this journey to ensure that candidates meet the necessary criteria and appreciate the responsibilities and privileges of the livery.

Our strength lies in the commitment of our members. Please continue to share information about our livery company within your networks.

# MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

## RENTER WARDEN MICHAEL ASHDOWN, CHAIR



### Membership Committee Achievements

In 2025, we have admitted 17 members and advanced 21 to liveryman, we would therefore like to wish a warm welcome to:

#### Joined WCTA from Sept 24

Alexander Baulf	Lorna Straker
Anthony Torbey	Mark Schofield
Benjamin Craig	Michael Smith
Christopher Smith	Paul Johnson
Craig Chatwin	Praveen Gupta
Craig Kay	Robin Prince
Donald Korb	Stephen Hasson
Erna Wessels-Ridder	Steven Martin
Joseph Leach	

#### Liverymen from Sept 24

Patrick Ronan	Matt Coward
Tom Wallace	Annie Bailey
Colin Smith	Nila Khan
Agata Kozolup	Dr Peter Wilson
Peter Jackson	Caroline Artis
Maceo Frederick	Karen McNicholls
Maria Kendrick	Gwendoline Ryder
Ben Branson	James Carr
Jeremy Coker	Laurence Lancaster
Craig Kay	Stephen Hasson

### Companions

In 2025, Court conferred Companion status upon six individuals:

Name	Achievement
Alderman Simon Pryke	Affiliated Alderman (illustrated to the right)
Graham Batty	President ATT
WO2 Bikram Bishwakarma	Prize winner
Joseph Fletcher	Prize winner
Andy Lam	Prize winner
Wg Cdr Graham Prager	Commanding Officer, 101 Sqn RAF



### Potential Members Event

In April 2025, we hosted a well-received event at IT Hall designed to welcome and engage prospective members. The occasion generated strong online interest, and around 30 attendees joined us in person for refreshments and an inspiring address by the Upper Warden, who shared insights into the Company's mission and values.

Liveryman Adam Taylor also spoke at the event, sharing his personal journey and motivations for joining the Company.

We're planning another gathering in September 2025 and hope to establish these events as a regular feature in our calendar. If you know someone who might be interested in learning more about the Company, these occasions offer a welcoming introduction—and attendance is free of charge.

#### Student Career Day at Lloyds of London with upReach

Members of the Membership Committee, together with representatives from the Education Sub-group, participated in the inaugural Financial Services Group Day held at the Lloyd's Building for associates of upReach.

upReach is a UK charity that supports university students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds to access professional careers, including those in financial services and taxation.

The event provided a valuable opportunity for meaningful conversations with upReach associates, many of whom expressed interest in the Company and its work. We hope that, as they progress in their careers—particularly in tax—they will consider engaging further with the Company.

The event provided a valuable opportunity for meaningful conversations with upReach associates, many of whom expressed interest in the Company and its work. We hope that, as they progress in their careers—particularly in tax—they will consider engaging further with the Company.

# 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



On Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> May, many members gathered to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Company – on the 24<sup>th</sup> floor of the Shard, on a glorious evening with panoramic views overlooking the City and beyond. This location was all thanks to the hospitality of QX Accounting Services.

The Master, Richard Geldard, summarised the proceedings, under the headings of 'Past, Present and Future,' before introducing the three speakers.

Past Master Michael Squires spoke of the origins of the Company, focusing on the combination of a desire to establish a Livery Company against the backdrop of a perceived temporary lack of regard for the tax profession in other quarters, together with difficulties elsewhere in establishing a Benefit Fund for those involved in tax.

Freeman Craig Chatwin spoke of the new relationship between QX Accounting Services and our Company, making welcome mention of contributions to our charitable activities.

Upper Warden Matthew Peppitt shared his vision for the Company's 2025/26 year, pending his election at the June Court meeting. His plans included dining at Halls not recently visited—or perhaps never before explored—alongside the possibility of a countryside visit to a vineyard, complete with a tasting of its produce. These were just a few of the many enjoyable experiences he hopes to offer in the coming year.



## Looking Ahead - Initiatives for 2025/26

**Potential Members Events** – Following on from the success of the event in April we are planning on holding several such events during the coming year.

**Members Stories** – Every member has a story. We currently have videos of a few members on our webpage setting out the reasons why they joined the Company. We would like to include additional members as this may encourage further people to join and will also demonstrate the diversity of our membership.

**Professional Seminars** – A number of Members have expressed interest in tax profession-related events and activities. While CIOT/ATT offer much in that regard, with which we would of course not wish to compete, we are now developing a series of seminars on contemporary tax profession topics such as Tax Policy, Navigating HMRC Enquiries. The first seminar was held on 20 October 2025 and details of future events will be provided in due course.

# IN MEMORIAM



While 2025 brings with it a host of new opportunities and initiatives, we must also pause to reflect on the loss of Liverymen and Court Assistant, Richard Citron a greatly valued member, who passed away on the Tuesday 2nd September.

With deep sadness, the Company acknowledges the passing of our esteemed colleague



Richard Citron, a distinguished figure in international tax advisory, spent 42 years at BDO before joining Blick Rothenberg in 2021 as a Partner in the Private Client team. His expertise spanned UK taxation of individuals, companies, partnerships, and trusts, often with complex cross-border elements.

He held key roles including UK representative on BDO's International Tax Committee and Chair of its Tax Planning Centre of Excellence. A founder member of STEP and Fellow of both ICAEW and CIOT, he also served as an Expert Witness in cases involving international dimensions. Richard will be remembered for his brilliance, integrity, and the lasting impact he made on colleagues and clients alike.

We honour his memory and raise a glass to our friend who has departed but will remain forever in our hearts.

# LORD MAYOR'S BRIEFING GROUP COURT ASSISTANT STEPHEN HODGSON



On the morning of 24 February 2025, I chaired a meeting of The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers Lord Mayor's Briefing Group with the 696th Lord Mayor The Rt Hon. the Lord Mayor Alastair King.

For many years we have provided tax policy briefings to Lord Mayors of the City of London Corporation in connection with their role as international ambassadors for the UK's financial and professional services sectors.

The briefing included:

- \* UK competitiveness in light of the Autumn Budget 2024
- \* replacement of the non-dom regime with the foreign income and gains (FIG) regime
- \* inheritance tax changes, including in relation to Business Relief and pensions
- \* the international and U.S. tax landscape following the election of President Trump

It is a privilege to chair the group and to have the opportunity to undertake this important work with the Lord Mayor, Mansion House, and the City of London Corporation.

Many thanks, as always, to the highly experienced, talented, and professional members of the Briefing Group, who kindly volunteer their time for the benefit of the City, Greater London, and the wider UK economy, including those present: Winnie Jinyue Cao, Grahame Jackson, Derren Joseph, Jeremy Mindell, and Tim Sarson.



# THE EDUCATION SUB-GROUP COURT ASSISTANT LORRAINE PARKIN, CHAIR



The Education Sub-Group operates under the auspices of the Charities' Committee as it receives the funding for its activities from both TABF and TACT. The group has been achieving great things, so I am delighted to report that at our Court meeting in June 2025, the Court promoted the group to Sub-Committee status.

The Education Sub-Committee is focused on maintaining and growing relationships with both schools and higher education establishments. It seeks to deploy both time and monetary grants.

Examples of activities include coaching Mulberry UTC for the Sheriff's Challenge, running a stand in partnership with the CIOT at the London Careers Fair organised by the Livery Schools Link, covered earlier in this article, delivering School Talks, supporting Moneywise, supporting City St. George's University, and supporting students in a number of establishments including the Guildhall School of Music, and Treloar's.

Working with pupils and students can be very rewarding and uplifting. Once again I was astounded at the standard of musical and vocal and performance when I attended the Guildhall School of Music's Gold Medal final for the school's opera singers at The Barbican on 8 May.

**Mulberry UTC** is a university technical college that specialises in preparing young people for careers in Health, Science, Business, Creative Media and Theatre. We are delighted to be working with Mulberry UTC, supporting their team that enters the Sheriff's Challenge, speaking about career opportunities and sponsoring places for pupils at City St. George's Future Professional Summer School. We had 2 pupils attend this year. We have been developing a relationship with **City St. George's University** for a few years because of their focus on business and their encouragement of young people to consider careers in the professions, including ours. We are one of the first 2 Livery Companies, along with the Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers to sponsor the summer school.

I was a guest of honour at the summer school graduation ceremony this year. It was inspiring and gratifying spring to experience the enthusiasm of the students.





I've shared a lot about our income, our grants and our beneficiaries. It would be remiss of me not to record the value of the hours our members have voluntarily given to charitable causes on behalf of the Company and its charities. In 2024, the latest figures available, this is valued to be over £61,000. By way of example, we have had volunteers delivering tax career talks in schools, mentoring tax students, participating in careers fairs, and briefing the Lord Mayor on tax matters that inhibit trade.

Through the Pan Livery Pro Bono Group, some of us have been working in partnership with the charity, Local Village Network, mentoring year 10 pupils at the Lilian Baylis Technology School this year. We've been working on the Amplify Me programme, which helps students think about their future studies and careers, prepare CVs and practise interviewing and presentation skills.

Last but not least, I wish to express my thanks to David Scott, for all the work he has undertaken as the Charities' Treasurer over the last 3 years. David retired from this role and handed it over to Bill Dodwell, on 1 July. Welcome Bill! Running our charities, our education activities and our pro bono activities is a team effort by lots of willing volunteers and I am truly grateful for everything everyone does. If you wish to become involved in any aspect of the work that I have covered in this article, please do not hesitate to contact me.



As a reminder for those who don't know (and the name of the Committee does not entirely make this obvious), the current remit of the Communications Committee is to:

1. Promote communication within the Company and to its members by a variety of physical and electronic means (including hard copy mailings, e-mail, Company publications (such as the Owl) and the Company Website);
2. Assist the other Company Committees with messaging and event promotion to Company members;
3. Promote the Company to third parties through the use of the Company's website and social media (including the Company's LinkedIn page and Twitter profile); and
4. Assist with the Company objectives (sustain, deliver, support and collaborate initiatives).

The Communications Committee also takes primary responsibility for the Company website, and over the last few years you will hopefully have seen that it has been overhauled, updated and improved. We would be grateful for any thoughts or improvements you may have.

With extensive help from Honorary Court Assistant James Dixon we also produced a lovely photographic montage celebrating the 30 years of the Company. This is now on the photos section of the members area of the website for those interested in perusing the visual history of the Company.

# THE COMPANY TEAM



## **The Master: Matthew Peppitt**

I am honoured to have been elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers for its 2025/26 year which spans the Company's 30th Anniversary.

I am now semi-retired from the tax profession after 40-years in various client-serving and management roles within Ernst & Young's tax practice where I specialised in the taxation of acquisitions and disposals, managed a number of Ernst & Young's own acquisitions and wrote a textbook on tax due diligence.

The Master chairs the Company during his year of office and directs or influences its charitable and social activities and events. The Master also represents the Company at the events and ceremonies of other guilds and livery companies, services affiliations and the City of London.



## **The Deputy Master: Richard Geldard**

Under our Ordinances and Regulations, the Deputy Master acts in place of the Master when the Master is unavailable for whatever reason.

Internally this can mean that the Deputy Master chairs Court meetings.

Externally the Master receives many invitations to events. We try to ensure that the Company is represented at as many of these as is reasonably possible. If the Master is not available, then we usually look firstly to the Wardens as a replacement in order to give them experience of City events and other Livery companies. However, on occasions, the hosting Company will only accept someone of equivalent rank, i.e the Deputy Master or another Past Master.

The Deputy Master is responsible for making proposals to the Master's Committee each March for new Court and Committee members. This involves taking soundings from existing members and asking others whether they are interested in volunteering for roles.

The Deputy Master also works closely with the incoming Master, particularly in the early months, to provide guidance and assistance as required.

The Deputy Master also works closely with the incoming Master, particularly in the early months, to provide guidance and assistance as required.

Richard worked as a senior corporate tax manager for EY in Leeds for 30 years before retiring in 2013. Since then he has travelled widely, explored his family tree and spent the odd moment or two on Worshipful Company matters!



## **The Upper Warden: Caroline Turnbull-Hall**

The Upper Warden is an experienced Warden, having served as both Renter and Middle Warden, as well as having chaired one of the Committees. The Upper Warden will, subject to election, become Master.

The role of the Upper Warden is not dissimilar to that of the other wardens, and includes assisting with Company functions and ceremonial duties, and supporting the Master. The Upper Warden will often represent the Master or the Company at City or Livery events if the Master or Deputy Master are unable to attend.

The Upper Warden is often a member of a group of prospective masters from other livery companies which helps to ensure that contacts are made and mutual support is offered.

I advanced to the Livery in 2012, having joined the Company in 2010. I have served on the Social, Membership and Charities Committees and chaired Social for three years. Having left corporate practice as a regulatory specialist in 2024, I have a portfolio career, which includes serving on HMRC's Professional Standards Committee and as a member of the Tax Law Review Committee



## **The Middle Warden: Howard Ashmore**

As Middle Warden, Howard's role is to support the Master and Upper Warden – helping with ceremonial duties, events and Company functions, and representing the Company when needed. He also acts as the bridge between the seasoned Upper Warden and the newly appointed Renter Warden, helping to keep things running smoothly and ensuring a steady handover of experience and enthusiasm.

Howard joined the Company in 2003 and was admitted to the Court in 2020. He has served on the Charity Committee and, until recently, looked after the accounts as Treasurer.

Away from Company life, Howard is a director of a general practice accountancy firm based in Hertfordshire. He's married to Ruth, a retired nurse, and outside work enjoys cycling and motor racing – pursuits in which he still likes to think he's every bit as competitive as ever.





## **The Renter Warden: Michael Ashdown**

The Renter Warden is the most junior of the three wardens. The name "Renter Warden" comes from the fact this Warden was traditionally responsible for collecting rent from properties that a Company owned. Our Company does not own any property, and all financial matters are now handled by the Treasurer. The Renter Warden assists with Company functions and supports the Master and the other two Wardens.

I was advanced to Livery in 2011 and joined the Court as an Assistant in 2020. I set up our Communications Committee and was its first Chair. I now chair the Membership Committee and have helped run our events for potential members of the Company. I have recently been involved in discussions with a number of businesses about supporting or sponsoring some of the Company's activities. Professionally, I run my own indirect tax consultancy business in Surrey.



## **The Treasurer: Jeremy Coker**

I am honoured to have been appointed Treasurer of the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers.

As a Partner at Oury Clark, I bring over two decades of experience in UK tax advisory, with a particular focus on supporting entrepreneurial businesses and international clients navigating complex tax landscapes.

In my role as Treasurer, I am responsible for overseeing the Company's financial affairs, ensuring transparency, sustainability, and alignment with our charitable and educational objectives. I look forward to working closely with the Court and the Clerk to maintain robust financial stewardship and support the continued growth of our initiatives.

Please feel free to reach out to me at [jeremy.coker@ouryclark.com](mailto:jeremy.coker@ouryclark.com) should you have any questions or suggestions regarding the Company's finances.



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



## Lady Mayor's Show Participation - 8 NOVEMBER 2025

The Lady Mayor's Show this year will be held on Saturday 8 November, and the Company will once again be taking part with other Modern Livery Companies.

It is a fantastic spectacle; why not come along and get involved?

This year's theme is the Blitz, and the Show will celebrate the City's formidable endurance of, and heroic recovery from, the Blitz - 85 years ago.

The Modern Livery Companies will be joining the parade in a variety of fire brigade-related vehicles and uniforms of the period, courtesy of the Firefighters' Company (who are leading this collective effort once again). We also hope to be joined by a small contingent of our affiliated Army cadets.

On the day, there will be opportunities to spectate, to support, and to gather for a meal (breakfast or lunch) at Ironmongers' Hall.

Further details will be sent out later but for now, please save the date in your diary (Saturday 8 November) - and contact me directly if you have any queries. Indeed, just contact me to register your interest as there may even be one or two opportunities, nearer the time, to join the parade:  
[alison.lovejoy.delorie@btinternet.com](mailto:alison.lovejoy.delorie@btinternet.com).

<b>2025</b>	<b>Event &amp; Location</b>	<b>Type</b>
Monday 3 November	Tax Professionals Seminar	WCTA Online
Wednesday 5 November	Autumn Committees Day, Information Technologists' Hall and Committees' Supper	WCTA
Friday 7 November	Autumn Committees Day, Information Technologists' Hall and Committees' Supper	City
Saturday 8 November	Autumn Committees Day, Information Technologists' Hall and Committees' Supper	City
Wednesday 19 November	St Cecilia Festival, Westminster Abbey, Lunch at One Great George Street	City
Thursday 27 November	Battersea Dogs Home Tour	WCTA
Tuesday 16 December	Court Meeting at Information Technologists' Hall, Carol Service at St Bartholomew the Great, and Supper at Butchers' Hall	WCTA

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



<b>2026</b>	<b>Event &amp; Location</b>	<b>Type</b>
TBC February	Inter Livery Quiz	WCTA
Tuesday 3 February	History of Tax Lecture, Information Technologists' Hall	WCTA
Wednesday 11 February	Winter Committees Day, Information Technologists' Hall	WCTA
Tuesday 17 February	Pancake Races, Guildhall Yard, Lunch Guildhall Undercroft	Inter-Livery
Monday 2 March	Inter-Livery Bridge, Drapers' Hall	Inter-Livery
Tuesday 17 March	Court Meeting and Budget Banquet, Stationers' Hall	WCTA
Friday 20 March	United Guilds Service, St Paul's Cathedral, Lunch at Plaisterers' Hall (TBC)	Inter-Livery
Thursday 16 April	Big Curry Lunch, Guildhall	Inter-Livery
Wednesday 22 April	Spring Committees Day, Information Technologists' Hall	WCTA
Friday 24 April	Treloar's Gala Dinner, Mansion House	City
Wednesday 13 & Thursday 14 May	Inter Livery Clay Shooting, West London Shooting School	Inter-Livery
Saturday 17 May	Inter-Livery Regatta, Cowes	Inter-Livery
Thursday 11 June	Election Court Meeting, Civic and Charities Lunch at Bakers' Hall	WCTA
Wednesday 24 June	Common Hall: Election of Sheriffs, Lunch at Founders' Hall (TBC)	City
Saturday 27 June	Inter Livery Croquet, Sussex County Croquet Club	Inter-Livery
Wednesday 1 July	Summer Committees Day, Information Technologists' Hall	WCTA
Wednesday 1 July	Court Dinner, Temple Bar	
Saturday 04 July	Coopers' Cask Race, Guildhall Yard	Inter-Livery
Thursday 30 July	Joint lunch, WCTA and Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards, Dyers' Hall	Inter-Livery
Monday 21 September	Installation Court Meeting at Mercers' Hall, Church Service at St Michael Cornhill, Dinner at Mercers' Hall	WCTA

