

It was a huge honour to be elected as Master of the Company on Ascension Day, May 9<sup>th</sup>. Having spent my career at the Bank of England, the City of London is in my blood. So it is a privilege to continue my association with the City and to play a small part in keeping its traditions alive through the work of the ancient Livery Companies.

In the 420 years since King James granted our Royal Charter, people from all walks of life have held the position of Master. Each has steered the Company in their own way, and for the brief time that my hand is on the tiller, I would like to move us forward under three headings.

*Enlarging the Company.* A healthy Livery needs to grow; and unlike some Companies whose numbers are limited by constitution, we have no limit. The more members we have, the more talent we can draw on, the greater will be the networking opportunities for members and the wider will be the opportunities for friendships to develop.

*Engaging with the members.* Sometimes a member will join the Company and for whatever reason our engagement with them, and theirs with us, is not as strong as it could be. Our recent Membership Survey has delivered fertile ground on which to build, and partly in response to this, the Company has appointed a brand new office holder 'Membership Steward' who will drive forward an agenda for engagement.

*Enhancing our impact.* In any organisation, there are always things that can be improved or done more efficiently. Our gallant Clerk and Assistant Clerk, to whom I pay tribute and whose enthusiasm to innovate knows no bounds, will advise where the Master needs to devote his energies; but if a new pair of eyes can help the process, then I hope the Company will benefit. A new website and the digitisation of archives are just two projects that I plan to move forward.

As I begin my year, I pay tribute to my predecessor, Deputy Master Nigel Lusson, whose leadership over the past year has been thoughtful, persuasive and quietly determined. I take the Company into its 421<sup>st</sup> year fortunate to have a depth of wisdom among the Past Masters to advise me on how to nudge the ship's tiller to bring us to a healthy berth on Ascension Day 2025.

Christopher Scott  
Master 2024/5