The Basketmaker



The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers

Annual Review 2025

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The Prime Warden's Year

Prime Warden Julian Adams

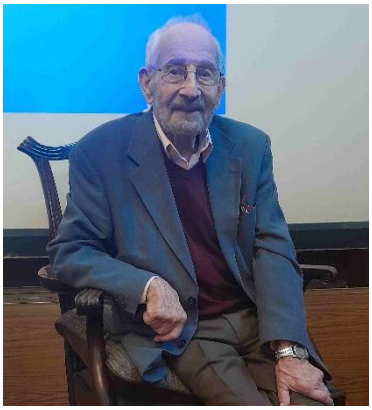


Prime Warden Julian Adams

I am so very grateful for the great privilege and pleasure of being the Basketmakers' Prime Warden in 2024/25. Two anniversaries were particularly significant for us in that time. The first was our celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Company receiving its Grant of Livery from the Court of Aldermen. The second was the celebration which marked the 50th anniversary of our close friends at the Basketmakers' Association. The twin themes of celebrating our identity as a Livery Company and the craft and trade of basketmaking ran as golden threads throughout the year.

John Fieldsend Talk

If the overall tone of the year was one of celebration, it began on a much more sober note. We were privileged to host John Fieldsend at the London Medical Society in November. John is one of the few remaining survivors of the *Kindertransport*, which rescued Jewish children from persecution in Nazi Germany in the 1930s. We heard firsthand what it was like to be a child growing up in Dresden as the Nazis came to power. We learnt how during this time they were slowly deserted by friends and increasingly persecuted by the State. They were forced to flee first to Austria, then to Czechoslovakia before finally John and his brother were sent by his parents to safety in England. That was sobering enough but it was harrowing to hear his parents' voice from the grave. They had remained in Prague and had subsequently been murdered in Auschwitz. However, a letter from them addressed to their sons had been kept in safety by a neighbour and sent to them by the Red Cross after the War had ended. There was barely a dry eye in the room when John read of his parents writing 'in farewell' to him and his brother (their 'dearest possession in the whole world') because they realised that 'We won't be spared and will go bravely into the unknown'. In the letter the boys were asked 'to become good men and to think of the years in which we were happy together'. In later life, John became a Christian and worked as an Anglican vicar, although he ended his talk by saying that, despite being a practising Christian, it had never stopped him being Jewish. A remarkable man and an occasion we are unlikely to forget.



John Fieldsend

Winding up the Year: The Carol Service

In December we revived a practice which had fallen into abeyance in recent years by deciding to invite the Pattenmakers to join us for dinner immediately after our wonderful Carol Service. As is traditional, this was held at Watermans' Hall which looks particularly festive at Christmas time. The dinner was a really lovely occasion and one that was enjoyed so much by all that both Companies resolved that it should happen again in 2025 – which it duly did and with equal success.

Winter revels

We enjoyed two very different events to help ward off the long, dark and damp nights of the early New Year. The first was our Livery dinner in January when we celebrated the Company's close links with the armed forces and the Royal Navy in particular. We were fortunate to have as our principal guest that evening Richard Kemp, the commanding officer of HMS Richmond who told us of the various tours of duty they had undertaken over the past 12 months – which ranged from tracking Russian submarines in the Arctic to protecting shipping lanes in the Red Sea from Somali pirates and Houthi missile attacks. This was the only opportunity we would have to see HMS Richmond that year since they were part of the UK Carrier Strike Group that was led by HMS Elizabeth in its seven month Indo-Pacific deployment. Commander Kemp had asked the Basketmakers to play a small part in HMS Richmond's preparation for this by holding a basketmaking day for members of the ship's Company as part of their team building activities at HMNB Devonport. We were very grateful to Yeomen members Hilary Burns and Linda Lemieux for doing this.



The Prime Warden with Lt Cdr Normanton

Our second brumal precaution was to take part by Zoom in cheese and port tasting in the comfort of our own homes where our host was 'The Big Cheese' from York whom many will remember from similar events held during Covid. We were talked through our whites, pinks and various dark red coloured ports (LBV, Ruby etc) and with paired cheeses with both aplomb and gusto.

Cambridge

The tempo of activity picked up sharply in April and began with one of my favourite events of the year when a group of us went to spend the weekend at my *alma mater* Magdalene College in Cambridge. Over 60 of us stayed in the college and enjoyed a fabulous time together whether it took the form of punting on the Cam, guided walks around Cambridge led by Sue King and Bob Shaw or private tours of the University's Botanical Gardens or the Fitzwilliam Museum. We were also treated to a Master Class of East Anglian Basketmaking by Yeoman Member Nadine Anderson.

However, the highlight for many – and certainly for me – was the celebration on our first evening at Magdalene. As is traditional, this began with Evening Prayer in the College Chapel which was movingly led by PPW Peter Yarker, followed by drinks in the Cloisters of the Pepys Library and then a sumptuous four course meal in the 16th century Hall. The College Hall is the only one in Oxford or Cambridge which is entirely lit by candles; only the atmosphere was electric. We were fortunate to have my old tutor Professor Eamon Duffy as our speaker that evening and he spoke movingly about the importance of communities and characterised both the College and the Basketmakers as being 'refugees of fellowship' in an increasingly anonymous and globalised world. It really was a very special evening.



Magdalene Hall

The Letzi Guild in Zurich



Basketmakers cheering on members of the Letzi Guild

Almost immediately after Cambridge, a Group of 10 Basketmakers travelled to Zurich for the annual Festival of Sechselauten. We were graciously and generously hosted as always by our sister Company the Letzi Guild. We were treated to an extensive tour of the city and watched the Children's Parade with fascination. To be part of the almost 180 Letzi contingent of the Parade was an experience few of us will forget and still less the exploding snowman on the top of a massive bonfire which was being continually circled by galloping troops of cavalry drawn from across the various Guilds.

Summer events

May brought us our Court Dinner, an invitation to which was extended to all members of the Company since it represented the occasion where we celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the Grant of Livery. As such the evening gave us an opportunity to reflect on our past and acknowledge the many who had come before us – stewards, benefactors and quiet grafters alike – who had together built the foundation upon which we now stand. It was also an opportunity to recognise that we owe it to them and to those who will follow to keep building a future worthy of our past.



Also in May we were most fortunate to visit Kew Gardens where we had a wonderful behind the scenes tour of two places not usually open to the public. The first was the Tropical Nurseries where plants are grown for the rest of the Gardens and the scientific work which is at its core. We heard first hand from the scientists about the role Kew plays in guarding against species' extinction as well as its function as a massive 'global reserve bank' of seeds and seedlings. The other area we visited was the Economic Botany Collection where we were fortunate to see among other items the Ancient Egyptian baskets which the Company had donated to Kew in 2008.

History was also the theme of our Summer Lunch. This was held at the Reform Club in the magnificent, gold-leafed Library an immensely long room with a single long table at which just over 70 of us were able to sit. We were also exceptionally fortunate to have been able prior to lunch to see and examine the Club's First Folio Edition of the Collected Works of Shakespeare – one of only 235 in the world. The lunch was further enhanced by our speaker Sir Rupert Gavin, past Master Grocer, Chair of the English Ballet and theatre impresario, who talked about the debt we owe to the two friends of Shakespeare whose enterprise and hard work meant that many plays were not lost forever, although we found ourselves wondering what they left behind on the cutting room floor!



Summer Lunch at the Reform Club

Our Trade Dinner at Vintners' Hall in July was a tremendous occasion and we were especially fortunate to be able to host HRH the Duchess of Gloucester at the pre-dinner drinks reception.



The Prime Warden greets the Duchess of Gloucester at Vintners' Hall



The winning baskets from the Basketry of the Year competition were on display, as were some of the baskets from The Big Weave, the Basketmakers' Association's huge weaving effort to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The Duchess of Gloucester kindly agreed to present the Competition prizes as well as those of the Walmsley Bursary and finally that of the award for an Outstanding Contribution to Basketry which was most deservedly won by Liveryman John Page.

The Annual Banquet

In September, after what felt like a short Summer break, we held our Annual Banquet at the Mansion House. Shortly before the Banquet began, as evidence of our commitment to those who guard and protect us, I signed on behalf of the Company the Armed Forces Covenant in the presence of the Lady Mayoress and senior representatives of each branch of the Armed Forces and the Army Cadets.



Signing the Armed Forces Covenant

From L to R: Major Derek Twigg, Officer Commanding 2 Company Cadets; Commodore Tim Green CBE ADC Royal Navy, Naval Regional Commander; The Lady Mayoress, Mrs Florence King; The Prime Warden; Group Captain Matthew D'Aubyn, ISTAR Air Wing Commanding Officer; Lt. Col. Neil Watson, Commanding Officer 8 Rifles

For many the Banquet represents the apogee of the Prime Warden's Year in Office; it was no different for me. 240 people attended the occasion and the Egyptian Room looked absolutely splendid bedecked with the Mansion House silver and the flowers so generously provided by PPW Anne Holden. We were fortunate to host the entire Civic party of Lord Mayor with the two Sheriffs and their respective consorts. It was an opportunity to showcase what we stand for as a Company – the celebration of our trade of basketmaking, to give a platform for our charitable work, to demonstrate the support we provide the Lord Mayor and the Corporation of London and finally to practice and enjoy fellowship both among members of the Company and with our guests.



The Prime Warden with the Sheriffs at Mansion House

Handing over

The final event of the Prime Warden's year is something of a bitter sweet experience – the annual church service at Saint Margaret Pattens followed by the Installation of a new Prime Warden. For me it was without doubt much more of the latter. It was a great pleasure to hand the baton on to Upper Warden Mark Cooper. I have absolutely no doubt in his hands the Company will continue to thrive and wish him well in his year in office.



Prime Warden Julian Adams with Sîan, Upper Warden Mark Cooper with Claire, and Under Warden Jon Pyzer

Before closing, I want to pay particular thanks to two people without whom none of the above would have been possible: our learned Clerk Richard Turner and my wife and Consort Sian. Their hard work, good humour and continual encouragement to me were invaluable. I could not have done it without either of them; nor would I have wanted to.

I should like to close these reflections where I began them; with gratitude to the Company for allowing me to be its Prime Warden. Thank you also for your unstinting support to me over this past year. I am - and shall forever be - most grateful for the privilege you bestowed upon me. Thank you.

Company Events

Installation Day







Lord Mayor's Show







John Fieldsend's Talk about a young Jewish boy escaping Nazi oppression



Company Basketmaking Day



Carol Service & Dinner at Watermen's Hall





Company Events continued

January Livery Dinner at Tallow Chandlers' Hall



Zoom Port & Cheese Tasting





Convivial lunch at Ironmongers' Hall



United Guilds' Service & Lunch at Barber Surgeons' Hall





Company Events continued

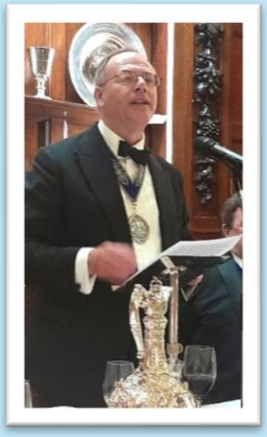
Prime Warden's Weekend in Cambridge








Court Dinner at Cutlers' Hall

Kew Gardens




Summer Lunch at the Reform Club



Election of the Sheriffs Lunch at Stationers' Hall





Company Events continued

Trade Dinner at Vintners' Hall, with the Duchess of Gloucester attending the Reception and presenting Awards







Signing the Armed Forces Covenant with all our Affiliates



Annual Banquet at Mansion House













Election of the Lord Mayor
And Lunch at Painters' Hall





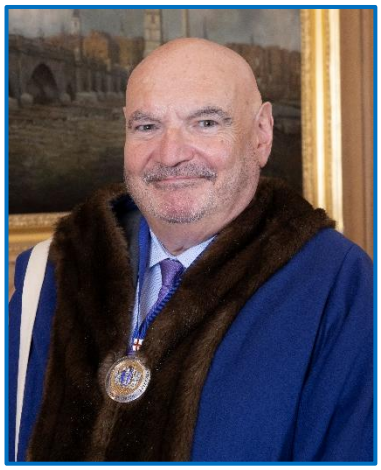
The Court 2025



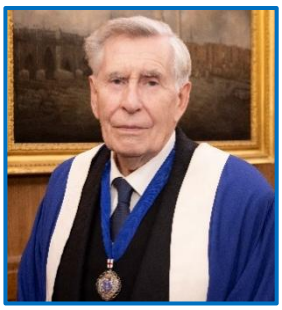
Julian Adams
Prime Warden



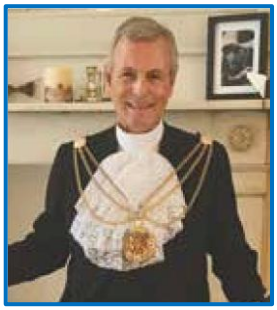
Mark Cooper
Upper Warden



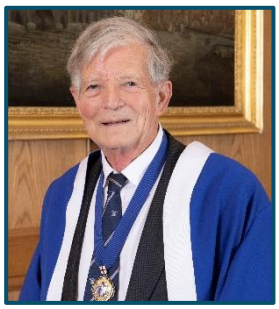
Jon Pyzer
Under Warden



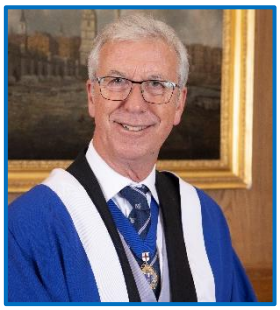
John Robinson
PPW 1992



Neil Radcliffe
PPW 2012



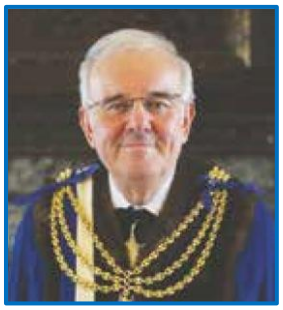
Graham Aslet
PPW 2013



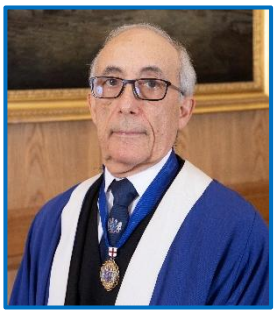
Edward Donaldson
PPW 2014



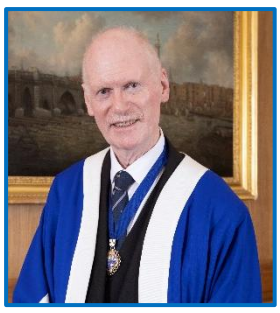
Richard Boucher-Giles
PPW 2015



Peter Allen
PPW 2016



Stephen Gee
PPW 2017

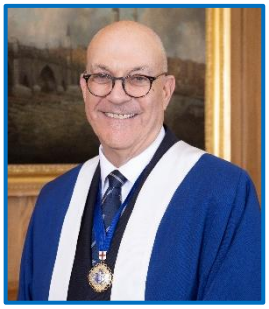


Christopher Hipkins
PPW 2018

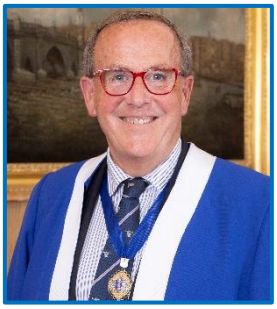


Anne Holden
PPW 2019

The Court 2025 continued



Lewis Bloch
PPW 2020



Roger Harper
PPW 2021



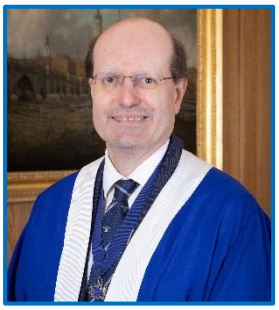
Judy Tayler-Smith
PPW 2022



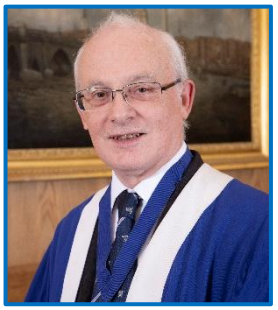
Lady Lauriston
IPPW



Simon Langton
Assistant



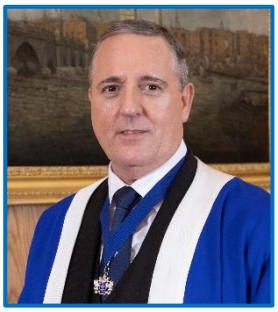
Philip Miles
Assistant



Hugh Thomas
Assistant



Peter Donaldson
Assistant



Mike Horton
Assistant



Stephen Bowsher
Assistant



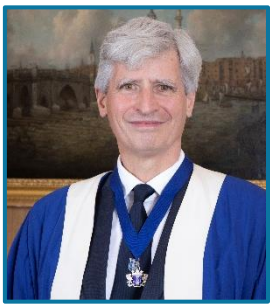
Vicky Nugée
Assistant



Sasha Keir
Assistant



Louise Smyth
Assistant



Casper Lawson
Assistant



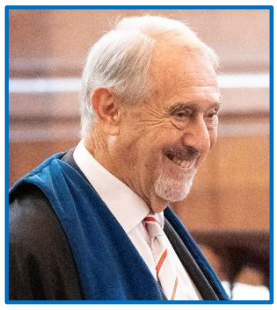
Sue King
Assistant



Jeremy Hipkins
Assistant



Richard Turner
Clerk



John Oakley
Beadle

Basketry Report

Every year we hold two Consorts basketmaking days - they've become such a fixture in the calendar that they're sold out almost immediately. It's a great way for consorts to meet in a fun and creative workshop and learn how to make a willow basket. This year Yeomen John Page and Trade Advisor Eleanor Morgan reprised their double act and taught nearly 40 enthusiastic novice basketmakers. At the company basketmaking day Yeomen Sue Kirk and Nadine Anderson taught Christmas decorations to members of The Company.



Company members at the basketmaking day

With well over 100 pairs of hands working on one basket the Schools Livery Link Day at Guildhall in February was its usual success. Yeoman Anita Vozik made so many rush bracelets with the children she ran out of material. It's so lovely to hear all the questions and see the fascination with basketmaking and just hoping that some of the young people see it as a valid career.



Sarah Hatton & Geraldine Poore being installed as Yeomen

Three new Yeomen were installed at the Trade Dinner in July, Phil Bradley, Sarah Hatton and Geraldine Pore. Yeoman John Page was awarded Outstanding Contribution to Basketry and all were presented to our patron, HRH Duchess of Gloucester along with the winners of this year's Basketry of the Year competition, Helen Leaf, Nick McMillen and Janet Sampson. The dinner was also a time to celebrate 50 years of the Basketry Association.

In January Yeomen Linda Lemieux and Hilary Burns ran a workshop for personnel of our sponsored ship HMS Richmond. The Charity awarded grants of £5000 to Eddie Glew for this year's Tear Up festival and the Lewis Basketry festival, along with a grant to the Weave Only a Trace exhibition and Lewis Prosser received £200. This year's Walmsley Bursary was awarded to Rachel Frost for research into historic basketry in hats whilst Hilary Burns was also given her suspended covid era bursary. Rachel also spent time repairing Gog and Magog before the Lady Mayors Parade.

The Sheep Drive in September seemed busier than usual - and Trade Advisor Eleanor demonstrated basketmaking at The Company stall (in between chatting to visitors and selling baskets). This was shortly followed by The Cockpit studio awards where two artist/basketmakers were given a Company sponsored studio space and business advice for a year.



Trade Advisor Eleanor Morgan at the Sheep Drive Livery Fair

Eleanor Morgan, Trade Advisor.

Yeomen Report

There are 51 Yeomen currently in the Company, their numbers swelled this year by Sarah Hatton of the Repair Shop fame and Geraldine Poore, former chair of the Basketmakers Association, currently on the All Parliamentary Group for Craft. Phil Bradley, a green wood maker, will be installed soon making the numbers up to 52.

This category of membership is not the norm in many of the Livery Companies; we are unusually devoted to the health of our Trade and our Yeomen are active in the life of the Company, providing tutors at the Company and Consorts Basketmaking Days, putting in an appearance at the Sheep Drive and the Livery Schools Link, and fêted at the Basketry Showcase (3rd March 2026). Our Trade Advisor, Eleanor Morgan, commissions articles of basketry from this membership group for presentation to our VIP guests at company events.



This year, thanks to the efforts of the Prime Warden, a day of basketmaking was organised at HMS Richmond, the Company's naval affiliate, as pictured at the head of this page. Yeomen Hilary Burns and Linda Lemieux travelled down to HMNB Devonport to teach a day of willow basketry to the young trainee officers.



Rachel Frost, with Liveryman Mike Horton, working on Gog

Yeoman Rachel Frost came down to work for a day refurbishing the Giants, Gog and Magog, particularly their hair and beards. She won the 2025 Walmsley Bursary for research into heritage hat making using basketry techniques. Many others attended the Trade Dinner in July to be introduced to HRH the Duchess of Gloucester and to celebrate the winners of the Basketry of the Year competition.

The Charitable Trust has also been active in support of the Trade. Yeoman Eddie Glew, preparing for the 2026 Tear Up Festival is very grateful for a continued promise of funding. The Trust devotes nearly 50% of its yearly funding to the Trade, providing two workspaces at Cockpit Arts for emerging basketmakers, the Yeomen of the future.



Yeoman John Page with the Duchess of Gloucester

Yeoman John Page, 2025 Outstanding Contribution to Basketry emeritus, represents the Yeomen on the Trade Committee. He is an invaluable member as are the other two professional basketmakers who attend, The Trade Advisor and Louise Brown, past chair of the BA.

Sasha Keir, Chair of the Trade Committee.

The Charitable Trust

For those of you who were not able to attend the Installation Day in October 2025, we present herewith the report that was given by Anne Holden, Chairman of the Charitable Trust.

I am delighted to report to you that our Charitable Trust is in a satisfactory position. Our invested funds are held with Cazenoves. The portfolio has made further progress this year due to strong markets and should be defensively positioned to avoid the worst of any potential future market turbulence. It continues to provide a healthy income which we use to make grants to worthwhile charities and to support our trade. A list of the significant grants we have made follows this report. Due diligence visits are made to charities we support, wherever possible. Our support for the trade is in line with last year's giving, we are very much demand led. We pride ourselves on the level of support we give.

Since I spoke to you last, we received a legacy from liveryman Derek Oliver. How generous of him. Derek had been a most enthusiastic steward in his time. We thank him most sincerely. Please consider how you could also leave a gift to the Charity.

Special thanks go to my fellow trustees. This year in June, Hedley French, who had been our secretary for many years, stepped down as a trustee. Richard Burn has expertly taken over that position. Our Trade Committee Chairman, Sasha Keir, stepped up to be a trustee in place of Hedley. Our trustees are wonderful, dedicated liverymen who give so much of their time. My fellow trustees, thank you so much for all you do.

Our love of the City of London, our support for the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, to support the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers and its charity work, is why we are all here today. To belong to a livery company has its responsibilities. We are all lucky to be able to afford to be here, so let's pass on some of our good fortune to others in need. When we interview those looking to join us as liverymen, we make it clear that they will be expected to make a regular contribution to our charitable trust if so elected to join us.

For those of us who give regularly, please look at what you give. Some of us have not revised the direct debit amount that we give for some years. Prices have gone up for all of us. It would make such a difference to what WE are able to give, if you could review what YOU give. Please be generous.









The Charitable Trust Continued

These are the charities supported this year:

		£
Sheriffs' & Recorders Fund		5000.00
The Lord Mayor's Appeal		2000.00
The City of London School Charitable Trust		2000.00
The Guildhall School Trust		2000.00
Cathedral Church of St Paul in London	Support to St Paul's Cathedral	2000.00
City of London Corporation	City of London School for Girls – Bursary Fund	2000.00
Trustees of the United Guilds' Service		250.00
St Margaret Pattens Church		6400.00
Crown & Manor Boys Club		7500.00
XLP		7500.00
Gam Care		7500.00
Foodcycle	St Cuthbert's Church, Kilburn	7500.00
Glass Door		7500.00
City Harvest	Livery Food Initiative	5000.00
Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness Ltd		5000.00
WCofB Company	Livery Schools Link	2102.90
The Manna Society		2000.00
Women's Trust		1000.00
Mayor of London	Mayor of London's Fund for Young Musicians	1000.00
The Respite Association		1000.00
The Zacchaeus 2000 Trust		1000.00
Number Champions		1000.00
Success Club CIO		1000.00
Attend		1000.00
Strength & Learning	Strength & Learning through Horses	1000.00
Winston's Wish		1000.00
Maxability		1000.00
Incommon Foundation		1000.00
The Marfan Trust		1000.00
St Joseph's Hospice Hackney		1000.00
		64,602.90

Over the past year, the Charitable Trust increased its support for the trade hugely from circa £41,000 in the year to March 2024 to circa £75,000 in the year to March 2025. This increased expenditure included the ongoing annual Walmsley Bursary, the Roy McLeod Award and bursaries for basketmaking courses at City Lit. The Trust also provided financial support to, inter alia:

- the Scottish Basketmaking Circle;
- the Split Wood Basketry Exhibition;
- Weave Only a Trace;
- Lewes Basketry Festival;
- Ditchling Museum of Art & Craft;
- Producing a Guide to Traditional Basketmaking in Shetland;
- The Basketmakers' Association;
- Two students undertaking an educational trip to Japan to learn about basketry techniques in Japan.

Report by Anne Holden, Chair of the Charitable Trust



RAF ISTAR AIR WING

There has been a great deal happening across all of our Force Elements, with the end of the summer holidays signalling the return to a busy season of flying, training, celebration and of course operations. The backdrop of world events so regularly on the news, and the associated focus on Defence, means our activities have yet again been under much demand and scrutiny from the Euro-Atlantic, to Eastern Europe, the Middle East and beyond.

Much focus has been dedicated to our new uncrewed capability; Protector RG1 has been working through its testing phases, flying primarily off the coast of the UK, conducting live trials across all systems and current capabilities. This essential work is being undertaken in earnest, in anticipation of commencing live operations and deployment of aircraft with 31 Squadron, to begin in the near future.



Our Intelligence specialists on 1 ISR Wing have continued to deliver on global operations across all workstreams that the ISTAR force have been involved with, demonstrating yet again how valued the sections are across the RAF. Outside of the ISTAR Force, they were also attached to the Combat Air Force on request, to deploy to Poland as a part of the RAF Typhoon detachment in support of Operation CHESSMAN; a UK led NATO enhanced policing mission protecting the Eastern Flank of the alliance.

51 Squadron have been flying slightly different missions over the last few months. Though their main focus has still been flying weekly NATO Intelligence gathering sorties on the Eastern Flank, they preceded the Carrier Strike Group as they made their way through the Red Sea and the dangerous Bab-el-Mandeb strait. This capable and tested platform received praise from operational commanders, ensuring that any potential threats to the Carrier Strike Group were recognised, disseminated and subsequently mitigated by the surface fleet.

Looking further North to the icy seas beyond RAF Lossiemouth, Poseidon aircraft have been employed regularly on Maritime Patrol missions alongside our NATO allies. Their typical area of operations is the

'GIUK Gap', the strategically important navel choke point between Greenland, Iceland and the UK. Though we naturally can't go into detail with regards to the specific missions, I can assure you that the skilled crews and excellent technology on board the aircraft have resulted in consistent success.

42 (TB) Sqn were recently honoured by the presence of His Majesty the King at RAF Lossiemouth, who formally stood up the Squadron. This traditional ceremony is the formal recognition of the Unit's reactivation and its role within the RAF. Those on parade turned out impeccably and were well supported by a joint Poseidon and Typhoon fly past.



The E7 Wedgetail Program has continued to take more steps towards RAF Initial Service Date. Though still experiencing the challenges that affect all highly complex capability introductions, we have seen some positive milestones completed across the enterprise. Indeed, crowds were wowed with a surprise at the Royal International Air Tattoo when an RAF Wedgetail flew in formation with the Red Arrows for the first time. There is still a great deal of Test and Evaluation activity to be completed but we hope to be operating E7 from RAF Lossiemouth early in 2026.

14 Squadron have recently returned home from an extended deployment period. What was originally planned for a few weeks grew into an enduring operation of nearly two years. Sustained by the regular roulement of Squadron and Air Wing personnel, they flew several hundred successful sorties in support of their mission. Testament to the grit and determination of both the platform and people committed to delivering this capability on behalf of HM Government.



The Prime Warden with Cpl Aiden Wall

Group Captain Matthew D'Aubyn, ISTAR Air Wing Commanding Officer, attended the Annual Banquet in September, and signed the Armed Forces Covenant with us. Prime Warden Julian Adams presented the Aviator of the Year Award to Corporal Aidan Wall, which is a modern trophy created for use for the first time last year but intended to have each year's winner's name engraved upon it. The Award comes with a cash prize of £100 and a donation of a further £100 to a relevant charity. The charitable donation went this year to a new RAF charity, The Mark Long Trust, set up in memory of Squadron Leader Mark Long of the Battle of Britain Memorial flight who was killed last year when a Spitfire he was flying crashed. The charity contributes towards flying scholarships for disabled people to help them work towards obtaining their Private Pilot's Licence.

Gp Capt Matthew D'Aubyn Commander ISTAR Air Wing



HMS RICHMOND

Operation Highmast Having been fitted with the new Naval Strike Missile system in March, the operational capabilities were tested in Norway on the NATO ranges. Richmond returned to Devonport, where the ship's company enjoyed Easter leave before sailing on her eight – month deployment with the Carrier Strike Group.

HMS Richmond took part in a week-long exercise in the Mediterranean involving both UK and Italian CSGs. The combined force included 21 warships, 3 submarines, 41 fast jets and 8,000 personnel. The exercise was designed to simulate modern-day threats.

After a successful visit to Souda Bay, Crete, CSG headed through the Suez Canal, something of a 'rite of passage' in the Royal Navy, and the company enjoyed seeing the sights of Egypt from the upperdeck. Entering the waters controlled by Yemeni rebels off East Africa, the Ship was on high alert. After a quiet passage, the company took part in games such as 'row the Suez'.

Richmond then sailed into the tropical storms of the Indian Ocean, where she took part in exercises with the Indian Navy. The Royal Marines Boarding Team were kept very busy conducting a variety of serials, fast roping onto the flight deck from a Merlin Mk4 and close quarter battle clearing through the ship.



After crossing the Indian Ocean, HMS Richmond made a welcome landfall in Singapore, where the company enjoyed a run ashore. They also established the Highmast Harmonies, a sea shanty choir, and a whole ship tea and cake to celebrate the ship's birthday.

This is, sadly, to be HMS Richmond's final deployment as she is now 30 years old. Hew commander, Richard Kemp, is justly proud of her long list of achievements throughout a long career. He is also grateful to all who support her, including the Basketmakers, who contribute to her success.

Commodore Tim Green attended the Annual Banquet and signed the Armed Forces Covenant with us.



8th BATTALION THE RIFLES

2025 has been a dynamic and productive year for the battalion. Our shooting team qualified for the prestigious Army Operational Shooting Competition in Bisley, reflecting the highest standards of military marksmanship. Operational commitments remain strong, with Riflemen supporting peacekeeping in Cyprus and contributing to the training of Ukrainian forces in the UK. A team took part in cyber warfare exercises in South Korea and Cyprus, gaining valuable experience in cutting-edge environments. The battalion also qualified its first senior drone operator and established a nascent team of pilots, laying the groundwork for a robust, modern drone capability battalion wide.

We continue to deliver meaningful engagement across the regiment's five pillars: Regulars, Reserves, Cadets, Veterans, and Communities. In March, our Bugle Breakfast in Durham welcomed 80 guests, evenly split between employers and local dignitaries. Support to regimental associations included repairing the track to the Guyzance DLI memorial in May. Our relationship with cadets in County Durham remains strong, especially through the Cadet Band and Bugles. Partnerships with local authorities and the RFCA continue to thrive. In July, the battalion sounded the retreat at The Story, hosting over 100 guests - your presence, ma'am, was greatly appreciated on a truly memorable evening.

Interest in sport and adventure training remains high. In January, 28 members deployed to Val Thorens to complete Ski Foundation awards, with one Rifleman placing in the top 10 at the Army Alpine Ski Championships. The battalion also placed 2nd Minor Unit in the Army North Cross-Country Championships and won the veterans category of the Army North HYROX event. Riflemen continue to represent the battalion in Army-level sport, including rock climbing, Jiu-Jitsu, and angling.

The next six months will be dominated by our preparation, deployment, and recovery for Exercise Rhino Heart 25 in Germany. This multinational exercise will see us operate alongside NATO allies, strengthening interoperability and showcasing our capability. The shooting team will return to Bisley, and our Cambrian Patrol team is training hard to improve on last year's bronze medal in one of the world's most demanding military skills competitions. We are proud to have been selected as the lead unit for peacekeeping operations in Cyprus from 27 October and look forward to making the most of this exceptional opportunity.

Neil Watson Lieutenant Colonel, Commanding Officer 8th Battalion The Rifles

CADETS



The Basketmakers remain proud of their connection to the 2 Company City of London and North East Sector Cadet Force, which provides such excellent opportunities for young people who might have limited chances otherwise. We will continue to seek ways to support their activities, including for their annual summer camp, where they learn about engaging in team activities.





The cadets continue to provide very smart stairguards for several functions, such as at the Reception before the Trade Dinner, where they helped welcome the Duchess of Gloucester. We look forward to the continuation of our ceremonial guarding. It was a joy to have visited them on a few of their parade nights and seen the young people learning so much... not only how to march smartly but also to learn about first aid and other essential skills to equip them for life.

We were sad to hear of the departure of Major Derek Twigg, who was the commanding officer of the cadet group for a number of years. He and his wife (also a cadet officer) were very pleased to have attended our last Mansion House banquet. Here Major Twigg is pictured with the Prime Warden. I have not yet been informed of the placement officer, but I hope to be able to meet him or her soon and will keep the Company up to date with progress.



Report by Under Warden Hugh Thomas



Guild Church of St Margaret Pattens with St Gabriel Fenchurch

Revd Andrew Keep turns 70 next birthday and will retire, as per Church policy, though his tenure as Priest-in -Charge will be extended for a further 6 months to ensure a smooth transition. This will take the Church to the AGM in 2026. The reverend was invited to continue as Honorary Chaplain, but he feels this role would be better undertaken by his replacement, strengthening the bonds between the Livery and their Guild Church.

In recent reviews the Church fared well in its assessment for fitness for purpose, spiritually, legally (accounting, compliance) and physically. Referencing concerns that two thirds of the churches within the Square Mile might face closure, it is reported that St Margaret's continues to prove its viability with a steady average congregation in the late teens and a growing calendar of additional activities, some of which Basketmakers have attended in the past year.

The Church continues to rent out conference rooms in the Tower as an additional source of income, and, in fact, some Basketmakers also rent space from time to time for Company business. Discussions continue with solicitors to formalise a licence for the Indian Orthodox Church. All this contributes to the Church's finances being in a stable position.

The Church intends to upgrade its environmental footprint by installing solar panels, for which it will be seeking support from the Basketmakers.

The Friends of St Margaret Pattens continues to thrive, laying on the Patronal Festival with jazz band in July. PPW Chris Hipkins is our contact there, and he did an excellent job in encouraging attendance, including Sheriff David Chalk.



The Letzi Guild



In April the Prime Warden led a party of ten Basketmakers to visit our affiliated Guild, the Letzi, in Zürich to join them in celebrating **Sechseläuten**, the festival banishing Winter.



Monday was the day of the parade, and began in true Livery fashion with speeches. The participants were given flowers to carry; the Prime Warden carried his with pride.

Finally, led by the Letzi band, we set off to join the parade. The 25 Guilds of Zürich make a very brave showing. Everyone in the Guild takes part, including small children, all dressed in some sort of traditional costume; the Letzi represent farmers and so wear suitable costume, but they also dress as pikemen and soldiers and messengers – such a fantastic array of really splendid and colourful costumes. The parade ran nearly 4 miles through the packed crowds in the town: Guildsmen and bands and dancers and horses and carriages.

At last, we arrived at the huge square where the *Böög* stands, that is the immense stack of wood with the snowman effigy on top; the symbolism is that Winter is burnt away. As the clock struck six, the bonfire was lit and soon the flames were roaring upwards. Most of the Guilds fielded a troop of horses, which entered the square in groups of ten or twelve, and rode round the *Böög* as it was burning. At the top of the bonfire, and especially in the snowman, were firecrackers which exploded as the heat reached them. The hope is that the snowman's hat will be blown off, or that at least it will be burnt up quickly to usher in a good Summer and harvest.

It was a fabulous visit, and we all felt much honoured to be included so wholeheartedly in the Letzi's historical pageantry.

The Zünftmeister, Stefan Forster, and Jürg Vogel, past master and current Basketmaker, came to London to attend the Annual Banquet in September with their wives.

We look forward to returning the Letzi's hospitality and good will when they visit us *en masse* for the Banquet next year.



Zünftmeister Stefan Forster with the Prime Warden



LIVERY SCHOOLS LINK

The 11th Livery Education Conference was held in January at Merchant Taylors' Hall to discuss 'Helping young people enter the job market'. Organised with help from the Educators' Company, and with over 100 Livery and school representatives, the presence of the two Sheriffs and the Master Merchant Taylor for the opening of the conference created an excellent start.

Two animated sessions of discussions led to the following main points:

1) Schools need to continue to look at ways in which the curriculum and careers can be linked. Maybe Livery Companies can help.

2) More information and communication about what Livery Companies can offer is needed by schools. The Livery Schools Link has just published the latest booklet 'The Livery in Education and Skills' and this gives details of what Livery Companies support in the education area.

The LSL Livery Showcase took place on 3 & 4 February for top age groups primary pupils and secondary students in years 8 and 9. The atmosphere on both days was lively and vibrant. The stall holders enjoyed it and their main comment was how tired they felt by 3.00 when the schools departed leaving the Guildhall with a quiet atmosphere. From the basketmakers, Trade Advisor Eleanor Morgan and Yeoman Anita Vozik ran a busy stand, encouraging pupils to try their hand at making a basket.



Many Livery Companies brought one or more firms working in their area to demonstrate the occupations available. The Livery Companies who come, typically make good efforts to welcome students to their stalls.

The timing of this event in early February seems good as several of the secondary students were able to ask questions before they were asked by their school to choose their GCSE courses in March. Some gaps in coverage were filled by inviting Companies who were also involved with other parts of the London Careers Festival. e.g. EoN and Colas Rail. The Army and the City of London Police also had stands.

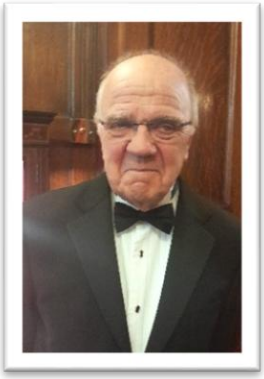
Dr Lis Goodwin Chairman LSL

Company News

We welcome **New Freemen:**



Wendy Clay



Barry Downs



Nick Lock



Haydn Stokes



Ghanem Nuseibeh



Alexandra Roberts



Ethan St Catherine



Caroline Stockmann

New Liverymen:



Michael & Lesley Bull



Anne Clark



Wendy Clay



Charles Kitching

New Yeomen



Geraldine Poore



Sarah Hatton

Sadly, this year we have also lost some old friends:

Yvonne Young
Michael Thrower
John Cooper
Derek Oliver
Graham Redcliffe

They will be much missed.



In the last year, the number of members has risen to 107 Livery companies and the membership of the very active WhatsApp group is 47. There are now quarterly newsletters. The group has monthly Teams meetings helping members formulate their climate action plans and regular Forums to discuss aspects of the eleven key areas of improvement towards climate resilience in the City. These are:

Heritage and listed buildings	Energy	Information Technology
Solid waste management	Circular economy	Value of green spaces
Water Management	ESG investments	Food
Transport	Heating, ventilation, air-conditioning	

In all of these areas the members of this group support the work of the City Corporation in the journey towards net zero and in the work of the City of London's Climate Action Strategy.

The most recent Forum was led by guest speakers Jonathon Louth (Chartered Architects) and David Bates (Nurses) and discussed sustainable work practices and energy reduction by combining technology with human skills. The need for local action to make green health become a social reality was linked to the Companies' strength in providing moral leadership in the future climate resilience in the City. Other Forum topics this year included "Decarbonising the Thames", "Sustainable Public Lighting " and "Green Finance". There is a strong feeling amongst the group that the City's work in the eleven key areas detailed above, may persuade other cities that building in green values and climate resilience will positively contribute to economic success.

The next Annual Conference will be on the 26th of January at Merchant Taylor's Hall and asks the question "Are We Ready?" We published our own Climate Action Plan in 2024 but one area that is provoking much discussion is the drain on resources both in power use and water of data centres and the need to delete emails, WhatsApp messages and all data no longer needed for reference and to be aware of how much duplication is taking up data support in the storage of multiple copies of photographs and messages. Those SPOCs (Single Points of Contact) of the Companies that have already published Climate Action Plans are recommending the inclusion of guidelines towards data storage reduction.

LCAG is now a properly constituted body with a committee and a Convenor, Alderman Alison Gowman CBE. It continues to be a very active group.

Report by Sasha Keir SPOC

The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers



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