



# Knitter

The Newsletter of the Worshipful Company of Framework Knitters

## A Cut Above The Others

Our venue for the installation of our new Master was The Worshipful Company of Barbers, which has had a Hall on the edge of the City, in the area of the northwest corner of the Roman Fort of London, since the 1440s. The first hall, built on the present site in 1441, burned down in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The hall was rebuilt and lost again, this time to the Luftwaffe in 1940, along with the rest of the old Barbican. The current Barber-Surgeons Hall was opened on the 13th May 1969 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.



### Ready for Dinner

The dinner began with saying Grace led by the new Master's Chaplain – Rev. Dr. James Saunders, Vicar of St. Mary's Church in Nottingham.

This was then followed by a delicious dinner of Black Bomber savoury cheesecake followed by seared grass-fed beef loin and finished with lemon-baked cheesecake with accompanying wines and port. Wonderful accompanying music was delivered by the harpist Ms. Emilia Agajew from the Guildhall School of Music.

The Guests' speech was delivered with due ceremony and respect for our distinguished guests by Assistant Buddy Penfold. The welcome reminded the

With a break from tradition earlier in the day in an open and inclusive ceremony in front of members and invited guests, the installation of Mr. Jonathan Pears as the Master Framework Knitter, Mr. Paul Bonnett as Upper Warden and Mrs. Janie Martin as Junior Warden took place.

The Company owes a debt of gratitude to the IPM – Peter Corah – for his sterling work, enthusiasm and dedication to the Company over the last year, a fact widely acknowledged and recognised during the evening.



**Rev. Dr. James  
Saunders**

*Continued overleaf*



**THE WORSHIPFUL  
COMPANY OF  
FRAMEWORK  
KNITTERS**

**2026-27**

**The Master**

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# New ... New... News !!

**Sadly, we have no new Liverymen to report. But do see The Master's plea for all Liverymen to try to recruit a friend !!**



**Mr. Simon McMaster**

Ash Shastri – Master Fueller – the founder of EnerStrat Consulting, established in London in 2003 to advise on what would later be known as the Energy Transition.

Piers Williamson – IPM Currier – recently stepped down as Chief Executive of The Housing Finance Corporation, and Major Paul Sparrow and Staff Sergeant Major Jason Edwards of the Leicestershire and Derbyshire Yeomanry.

A warm welcome was made to the Albion Knitting team: Christian Murphy, Owner and Director, and guests, and Richard Webster (MD – Shima Seiki Europe Ltd) – who also runs some of our student courses for us at Shima in Castle Donnington, and his wife Susan.

Our guest speaker to the

*Dinner, continued*

assembled members and guests that we are not just about our tradition but about using heritage, skill and practical understanding to innovate. The guests introduced to the company followed in that theme.

Mike Dodd – Master Glover – a true Trade Member with over forty years' hands-on experience in the glove and leather industries.



**Assistant Buddy Penfold**

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# From The



# Master

It caught me a little by surprise when Editor Paul Bethel reminded me he needed my 'Page Three' piece for this newsletter. Am I really to be the Master Framework Knitter?

I joined the Livery in 1998, following my Liveryman father. I had been selling knitting machinery and ancillary equipment for 10 years at this point, and many of the UK's textile manufacturing 'powerhouses' had Liverymen in the Framework Knitters Company. It will be great for networking, I was told. Beverley and I had two young daughters (Bryony – 2 years, and Alicia 6 months), so we really had our hands full and so couldn't participate in many dinners or events at that time – although I had already 'competed' in the Inter-Livery Swimathon courtesy of PM Jonathan Dean asking me 'do you swim' as the ink was drying on my signature as a Liveryman.

How did I get into textiles?

I went to school in Loughborough, firstly at Fairfield Primary, followed by Loughborough Grammar School. I thrived in these schools, playing many sports and being academically OK. I had always wanted to be a vet, devouring the James Herriot books, and working on a farm and later in a vet's surgery in the school holidays. Taking the three sciences at A level I could not quite achieve the necessary grades for vet school, so looking for an alternative, my eyes were turned by the prestigious Textile Depts. of both Leicester Polytechnic (in those days, De Montfort University now) and Leeds University. At interview at Leeds, whilst waiting in the foyer of the huge Textile Industries building, I studied a display which began with a sheep's woolly pelt, and progressed through yarns, fabrics, designs and finished off with the infancy of carbon fibre. Wow I thought, I want to be a part of this.

I graduated with a BA (Hons) in Textile Management, and went to work for Courtaulds in their 26-mill Northern Spinning Division making all types of yarns.

After a few years, a death in my father's knitting machine

agency just prior to Christmas was the opportunity for me to join my father and sell hosiery and sock knitting machines – the modern-day version of Rev. William Lee's Stocking Frame. I saw how at first hand a fashion trend could be born, grow and, in today's parlance, 'go viral' when a certain Princess Diana attended the opera wearing tiny bows on the heels of her hosiery. The hosiery trade went mad, first bows, then pearls, then flock designs and then crystals.



The Master with daughter Bryony

Jump forward to me entering the Court as an Assistant in 2012, participating in more Livery dinners and events as my daughters grew into teenagers. Lord Mayor's Show; Education and Charity Committees; recently chair of the Almshouses; not to mention the Pancake Race; Pétanque; and various Livery weekends: we really have a great Livery Company. Through our membership network we need to spread the word and entice more people to join

the Framework Knitters. Recently, IPM Peter Corah and I arrived in my car at the Guildhall vehicle barrier, loaded with knit samples, a Griswold, FWK banners etc. I pressed the intercom button and introduced ourselves as the FWKs for the Livery Schools Career Fair. We're on the List, I explained, the security person replied with 'oh we know the FWKs, come on in'. That's what I love: we are not the biggest, nor most senior, nor a wealthy Company, but we are great fun, colourful and enthusiastic, and have a wonderful reputation, and punch above our weight. We are launching the 'Member Get Member' initiative to maintain and grow our membership for the future. Who better to extol the virtues of our great Company than our wonderful membership. So if you know someone who would like to join us, just let me or Russ know.

I am deeply honoured to be your Master for 2026-27. I have followed closely in the wake of two great Masters: Matthew and Peter.

I will endeavour to follow their, and previous Masters, lead. Come with me: we are going to have a great year together!



**The Master with Staff Sergeant Major Jason Edwards**

### *Dinner, continued*

Company – Mr. Simon McMaster – an innovative and extremely passionate ‘blue sky thinker’ founder of Footfalls & Heartbeats, delivered a fascinating speech about the production of smart textile fabrics which can be incorporated into many kinds of fabrics to produce monitoring data which can be interpreted in many different ways to deliver a range of benefits. A proud New Zealander with a background in Chemistry and Nanotechnology, he had a eureka moment about the use of sensory fabrics



**Harpist Ms. Emilia Agajew**

which is now finding its way into all sorts of data monitoring wearables particularly in healthcare. The Master responded appropriately with the closing toast and provided a vision of his year ahead, acknowledging in particular the charitable work that the Company delivers year on year. The Master made a special reference to our past Beadle – Jamie Wallis – of 30 years’ service: we shall miss him and wish him well for the future.

The Master closed the proceedings by inviting all to join him for a Stirrup Cup.

**Liveryman Celestine Stafford**

## **CLERK’S CORNER**

I write this in the crazy two weeks before the Installation of our new Master which, for the first time in our illustrious history, will have taken place in a public forum.. If the hard work has paid off you will read about the success on the front page.. if not, the advert for a new Clerk is in here somewhere !!

My thanks to the members who have ‘converted’ to Go-cardless payment system: I hope this was painless for you. It certainly makes a huge difference to the back office functions and will also save us considerable money in taking payments as well. As ever, if you hit any problems please give me a shout.

I save my saddest news until last... Our wonderful Beadle – Jamie Wallis – has been forced into an early retirement having sustained a nasty injury to his leg. Jamie has been our Beadle since 1996 and will have no doubt seen many of you into the Livery with his trademark dry humour and wit. He was the right-hand man for four Clerks and was a solid rock who helped guide us to ensure the Company’s standards were upheld and passed down. My own personal favourite memory was a discussion about the loyal toasts early on in my time as Clerk... He said to me ‘will we be staying standing between toasts Sir, or will we be doing it the correct way?’ a true legend and we will all miss his presence greatly. Jamie signed off every email to me in the same way using a combination of military radio speak and liver seniority, and it rather sums the situation up well.

‘Beadle 64... Out’

**Wing Commander Russ Gleeson**

# The Great British Wool Revival

A comprehensive project was launched in 2024 by Fashion Roundtable and The King's Foundation to revive and promote British wool through industry collaboration, education, and sustainable practices, aiming to strengthen local supply chains and heritage crafts.

The Great British Wool Revival (GBWR) champions British wool, ensuring farmers receive a fair price for the fleeces that are too often seen as a by-product of the meat industry, whilst serving as a vital bridge between farmers and designers

Over two hundred businesses have joined from 44 countries, including John Smedley's Sustainable School Uniform Project. The initiative aims to promote UK value chains from farmer to designer, and highlights include the importance of British wool as a natural, sustainable material. Two hundred brands and businesses have joined this initiative to date, with over 6,000 website visitors in the last year. The 'Dumfries House Clip' scarf, which used wool from Dumfries House, sold out in under 48 hours!

British wool's history dates from 4000 BC to today, with the GBWR initiative emphasising



its decline and revival efforts: the rise of synthetic fibres in the 1960s led to decline, while mass production and Covid-19 further reduced demand: The Wool Story animation documents this evolution – see

<https://www.greatbritishwoolrevival.co.uk/ourvision>

The Livery Companies of London, dating back to the 12th century, historically regulated wool trades, and the GBWR plans to continue this legacy, promoting best practices and fair farmer income by restoring the value and pride of British wool, supporting heritage and regional supply chains.

For further information about the GBWR generally, see

<https://www.greatbritishwoolrevival.co.uk/>



# BRIGANTES NEWS

Founded in 2015, Brigantes has 250 subscribing members and 500 non-subscribing supporters. The Tribal Lands are similar to those of the Brigantes in Northern England in Pre-Roman times, with generous modern-day latitude to embrace all Liverymen. Membership of Brigantes is open to all Liverymen of the City of London (and Members of the Company of Parish Clerks and the Company of Watermen and Lightermen) who are in good standing with their Company. On average, a quarter of Liverymen attending Brigantes events are from London and the South East, while the furthest traveller so far has been from Christchurch, New Zealand.

The Lord Mayor and the two Sheriffs are ex-officio Members of the Brigantes during their period in office. Committee Members are drawn from across all Livery Companies and elected at the annual AGM. The Framework Knitters have the largest number of Brigantes Members, closely followed by the Engineers, Marketors, Accountants, Bakers, Fuellers, Carmen, Tax Advisers and Actuaries. If you would like to recommend a Liveryman for membership of Brigantes, please email Fiona Robinson – Administrator – at [livery@brigantes.org.uk](mailto:livery@brigantes.org.uk)

## 2025 Brigantes AGM and Winter Gathering – Buxton

The 2025 Brigantes Winter Gathering was held on Friday 12th December in the spa town of Buxton in Derbyshire, initially in the Pavilion Gardens and later in the adjacent Buxton Opera House. A maximum capacity of 200 Liverymen and guests attended, with a substantial waiting list. As you will see from the photograph below, the Framework Knitters and their guests were out in force with our Master – Peter Corah – leading from the front. And talking of leading from the front, at Buxton the Master, befitting his family's long history in clothing the nation, was the epitome of sartorial elegance and bonhomie, sporting a magnificently festive waistcoat embellished with a veritable herd of reindeer and numerous snowmen and Ho, Ho, Hos.



**The Master and Mistress, with Matthew Ellis, George Turner, Sheila Turner, Shaun and Mary Mackenness, Karen Sankey, Jenny Bentley and their guests**

The afternoon started with Mike Higginbotham talking on the subject of 'Taking the Waters – A History of Spas and Hydros'. Mike has lectured in social and architectural history for the Universities of Nottingham, Birmingham and Keele. He is an Arts Society (formerly NADFAS) lecturer and former tutor-guide for the Matlock Travel Society. Mike took us on a virtual tour down the ages of the country's many spa towns, their hydros and their treatments, from Roman to Victorian to the present day. Such was the belief in the health-giving properties of their magical waters that the discovery of just a single spring could be the catalyst for huge economic transformation. As Mike explained, while some spas have seen better times, others like Bath, Buxton and Harrogate are popular visitor destinations and continue to thrive.



**THAT Waistcoat**

After a short break, the Brigantes Tribal Chieftain Adrian Waddingham CBE (PM Actuary, Past Sheriff) took the Chair for the Brigantes 2025 AGM. Richard Geldard (PM Tax Adviser, Treasurer) reported Brigantes' finances and membership numbers were in good shape, and that 2026 membership subscription remains at £50. Adrian Waddingham and Sir David Wootton (Master Bowyer, Past Lord Mayor) were re-elected by rotation to the Tribal Council, with Matthew Ellis (PM FWK) formally elected to assist.

A highly convivial reception and early evening supper in the Octagon Hall followed. The formal Welcome to Buxton was given by Cllr. Barbara Hastings-Asatourian, Deputy Mayor of High Peak. The Revd. Dr. Peter Sutton said Grace. Then, Sir David Wootton proposed the Toast to the Guests to which Mrs. Elizabeth Fothergill CBE – Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire – responded. Adrian Waddingham made presentations including a Brigantes charity donation to the Deputy Mayor, and gave closing appreciations.

At 7.30 we joined the audience in the adjacent Buxton Opera House for this year's Christmas Concert. The Opera House, opened in 1903, has a superbly gilded auditorium created by the famous theatre architect Frank Matcham, who designed the London Palladium. Here the Brighthouse & Rastrick Brass Band – the current UK Brass Band Champions – treated us to a splendid programme



## **The Brighthouse & Rastrick Brass Band**

of traditional and modern music. The fabulous solos on cornet, flugel horn, euphonium, tuba and trombone had the atmosphere positively crackling. The evening closed with a nightcap or three at the Crescent Hotel, the Brigantes HQ for the Gathering, a two minute walk from the Opera House.

### **2026 Brigantes Breakfast – 16 July - Leeds**

On Thursday 16 July we shall be at the Royal Armouries in Leeds, the National Museum of Arms and Armour, which displays most of the Tower of London's vast collection.

If you are able to arrive early, the ever-popular annual Brigantes Lecture is at 10.30.

More details of Brigantes events, governance, charitable giving, photo galleries, applications for membership, etc can be found at the Brigantes website [www.brigantes.org.uk](http://www.brigantes.org.uk)

## Our January Luncheon

On Friday 23rd January 2026, members of the Company and their guests convened at Butchers' Hall in the City of London for the Winter Lunch. The Master and Mistress were hosts at a reception to give a warm welcome to all the attendees, where there was time to enjoy the welcoming drink on a cold January day and to catch up with Liverymen and their guests and wish them a Happy New Year. The Worshipful Company of Butchers is ranked 24th in order of precedence and can trace its roots back to 975 AD. The Butchers' was granted its Royal Charter by James 1 in 1605 and is now in its sixth Livery Hall, built in 1960, in Bartholomew Close. The hall has had a major update, and was re-opened in 2019 with a range of available suites, including a roof garden to view the remarkable upgrading of the surrounding area. H.M. The Queen Mother was a Freeman of the Company, and The Princess Royal was Master from 2011 to 2012.

Our venue for the lunch was the large and airy Great Hall, complete with stained glass in the windows, tapestries and ornate plasterwork. The layout of the tables was three sprigs and a top table, and Grace was said by the Master's Chaplain – the Rev. Steve Bailey. The menu, carefully chosen by the Master, was Devon crab, followed by feather-blade steak and seasonal vegetables, and chocolate and raspberry pave. As a wine enthusiast, the Master had made excellent choices with the accompanying wines. He first took wine with Mrs. Buddy Penfold – a new Assistant; then later, he made the Toasts to the King, The Royal Family and the Lady Mayor of the City of London Corporation. Next, the Beadle announced the IPM – Matthew Ellis – who said he was privileged to propose the Toast to the Guests and to heap praise on the Master, as the Master comes to the end of his successful year of office. The IPM is married to the Master's sister, so this was a very special occasion for their families.



### Taking Wine with new Assistant Mrs. Buddy Penfold

The Company had a number of very welcome guests to the Lunch. Mr. Chris Jones is Chief Executive and Clerk to the Trustees of Wyggestons and Trinity Almshouses Charity, one the largest providers of housing and care services in the sector based in the East Midlands. He has been able to provide invaluable advice to our Housing Manager – Liveryman Nettie Ellis – for the Company's own almshouses in Oadby. Master Butcher – Mr. Gwyn Howells, accompanied by Mrs. Virginia Howells – was thanked for the use of the Butchers' Company's magnificent hall. He is a passionate Welsh rugby supporter, and we wished his team well in the forthcoming Six Nations tournament. Next, Master Woolman – Mr. David Hopkins, accompanied by Mrs. Binnie Hopkins: the Woolmen are members of the 13 Textile Companies Group (which includes the Framework Knitters), set up to further the interests of the sector. The Master Woolman – a chartered accountant – is a keen sportsman and also interested in vegetables and bees. Master Upholder – Mr. Roger Wates, joined by Mrs. Sue Wates – represented the

Upholsterers and the Undertakers. He lists one of his interests as abseiling. Master Pavior – Mr. Charlie Laing – is the 5th Laing in his family to be installed as Master, which is an amazing record. He was accompanied by Mrs. Alison Laing. Dr. Sue Sumners – IPM of the Needlemakers' Company – joined us: she is a keen golfer. The Master Marketor – Mr. David Elmer – joined us along with his clerk – Ms. April Cowen – both of whom had been in their present positions for three days. He was involved in the development of Magnum Ice Cream, and lists his leisure activities as tennis and scuba diving. IPM Marketor – Mr. Julian Boulding – and Mrs. Anna Boulding joined us to make a strong representation from their Company. Mr. Mark Windsor – Secretary of the Croydon Sea Cadet Corps – also joined the Lunch. The Corps is affiliated with the Framework Knitters, and our Company takes a keen interest in its cadets.



**Chris Jones, with the Master & Mistress**

The IPM said that he had known the Master for around 27 years and they had both followed their fathers into the Framework Knitters. He admitted that there had been a little competition between them when comparing their years as Masters, with who had attended the more events, carried out more charity work etc., but – suffice to say – the Company has benefited by the enormous effort and enthusiasm both the Master and the IPM have put into their years of office.

Next, Mr. Chris Jones thanked the Company for their kind invitation on behalf of himself, Mrs. Dawn Gessey-Jones and the guests, and was happy to respond to the Toast on behalf of the Guests. He reiterated that he was always available to advise on any matters regarding the Oadby almshouses. He had been working in the sheltered housing sector for around 30 years, and he now saw a big shortage of good quality stock for people in need. It is thought that people live about 2½ years longer in sheltered housing with the benefit of a community, companionship, good neighbours and mutual support. He congratulated the Framework Knitters on looking after retired people from their industry.

The Master rose, thanked Mr. Jones for coming, and presented him with some tasteful socks made by PM George Turner's company.

The David Bryars' trophy – a very heavy glass design – was presented to PM Sheila Turner for her tireless efforts and time devoted to several years of knitting and organising the very successful *Knit for the Community* initiative. Over 2,500 blankets had been made and distributed to charities. For more information, see Page 4.

The Master and the Upper Warden then worked together as a twosome to give us a taste of the Framework Knitters' history and activities, particularly with regard to their inception, charitable work in education, housing and community service. They paid tribute to the Drapers' Company who contributed financially to the Education Committee awards and bursaries and supported 21 students on training courses on textile machinery in 2025/6.

With regard to the almshouses, notable success has been achieved with the building of two new houses with the highest modern standards overseen by Under Warden Paul Bonnett, who has great experience in this sector. A full programme of social events is offered to the residents.

The Master thanked the Clerk – Wg. Cdr. Russ Gleeson – ably assisted by his wife – Sqn. Ldr. Elizabeth Gleeson. He praised his logistics, the patience of a saint, his scheduling and steely reserve, and then thanked the catering staff for their excellent service and the Beadle for his 28 years of service with the Framework Knitters. He proposed a Toast to fellowship, service to the Company and community, and wished everyone a safe and peaceful journey home.

The Luncheon concluded at 4.10 pm.

# The Inter-Livery Pancake Race

## Shrove Tuesday – 17th February 2026

### The FWK Team

**Homes Manager Nettie Ellis** – The Team Manager

**Master Peter Corah** – The Masters Race

**Mistress Claire Corah** – The Ladies Race

**Assistant Gary Dixon** – The Liverymen's Race

**Master Elect Jonathan Pears** – The Novelty Race

The training had been completed, the Master Elect had sorted his attire and our Team Manager had set up a special WhatsApp group suitably named 'Top Tossers'.

The Team Manager's main rôle was to shepherd and coordinate us to the starting line in suitable time having fully briefed us on the rules. We were even threatened with drug testing, but fortunately this did not take place.

We all arrived in good time in Guildhall Yard with the going dry and firm – a great relief for those runners who favoured these conditions. There was a mild breeze from the North West, but this was not anticipated to affect our performance: in fact it may assist, mainly on the home straight.

After signing the usual disclaimers about injury, loss of limbs or pre-race meltdowns we registered, collected our aprons and hats and got gowned up.

Because of the number of runners in each category there were a number of timed heats to determine the 'best of the best'. The Masters' heats were first off; and after what seemed like a long wait it was your Master's turn. Into Trap 3, frying pan with pancake in hand, and then we were off, a quick dash (so he thought) but managed to come second in his heat, not fast enough to reach the final but not a total disgrace.

The next heats were for Liverymen, and so our 'secret weapon' Assistant Gary Dixon entered the enclosure after doing a few warm-ups to loosen the calf muscles and focus his mind on the end goal of being Top Tasser. The starting gun went off and he was away looking remarkably like Red Rum in the Grand National. As Gary ran down the length of Guildhall Yard the crowd were left speechless at his speed, fluid motion and pancake-tossing finesse: it was poetry in motion. The turn at the far end was conducted with grace and precision, and in no time he was half way down the home run and with a massive cheer over the finish line. But who had won the heat, and was it a winning time? We had to wait.

Then onto the Ladies' heats where my very own Mistress and Liveryman – Claire – had been persuaded that it would be a casual walk across the yard with a frying pan. After viewing a number of heats already she determined that in fact it was a fiercely competitive race that took no prisoners. She entered the enclosure, a few stretches to limber up, hoisted the gown so it would not impede her movements, grabbed a frying pan and waited for the BANG of the starting gun. They were off, down the outward leg like the wind, she tossed a perfect pancake and hit the far turn neck and neck with the front runner. The tension was mounting as they closed in on the finishing line, a slight stumble but regained her footing and unfortunately got pipped at the post to come second. Like the Master, not a disgrace.

There was then an interlude where the novelty participants were judged, our very own Master Elect dressed in all things knitted had to be separated from a reporter from The Times who appeared to be intrigued by his shorts and Union Jack-knitted socks. The competition, although friendly, had an air of quiet determination to outdo all others. The creativity of the costumes representing the Livery trades was imaginative, colourful and in some cases totally ridiculous. Unfortunately, he did not win this year: there is always next year.

And now the last heats before the final showdown. The novelty runners started, and very soon the Master Elect got called up to take his place, knees wobbling through anticipation or the adrenalin coursing through his veins. Knitted hat pulled down tight to reduce drag, knitted scarf firmly knotted and in place so not to impede his vision, Union Jack socks pulled up high either in an attempt to keep his legs warm or to once again reduce drag from his hairy legs, we will never know. The starters took their places, a spider, Tower Bridge, a set of drawers,



## Our Team in Guildhall Yard

steely grip, concentration on his face like a knitter threading thick yarn through a small needle but he wasn't looking straight ahead. Realisation slowly dawned that he was looking at the starters gun finger, poised for the first movement and then it happened, before the noise of the gun going off had reached us, Gary was off, Linford Christie in all but name.

The speed of our secret weapon was phenomenal as he tore down the Guildhall Yard, he tossed his pancake like Jamie Oliver, nothing was going to stop him achieving his dream. The turn at the end of the yard was not only impressive, it was stunning and like a slingshot he catapulted himself towards the finish line. One more toss to go and with a short flick of his wrist this was achieved without breaking stride, or sweat. Our Star thundered over the finish line to a photo finish and so once again we were left waiting. The announcement would take place at the prize giving ceremony after lunch.

After getting changed we had a bite to eat, a glass of wine and then the Ceremony started. Then once again we heard the immortal words, the winner of the Liverymen's race: "The Framework Knitters – Gary Dixon".

Thunderous applause erupted as Gary collected his engraved frying pan.

What a day, not only a really fun day but raising money for charity as well.

My thanks to the whole team for not only taking part but getting into the spirit of the day.

all representing different Liveries. The starting gun went off and so did the Master Elect, his scarf caught the wind as he hurtled down the yard like a WW2 fighter pilot on steroids. Into the turn with the fluid motion of a ballerina and rocketed back to the finish line..... then disaster struck. His final pancake toss should have been a masterpiece in culinary dexterity but it landed on the floor. This one small mistake cost him the title, as the two seconds it took to retrieve the now inedible mass was his downfall.

As we waited for the final showdown, unsure whether Assistant Gary Dixon would be called forward for the final showdown or as it is called 'The Victor Ludorum', we mulled over how we could improve next year and then we heard what we had all only hoped for. "Will the Following please enter the enclosure: Framework Knitters – Gary Dixon". Our Secret Weapon had done it, into the final. What a time to be a Framework Knitter.

As he entered the enclosure the atmosphere amongst the assembled spectators was similar to an England vs. Wales rugby match. The FWK's hopes and dreams were about to be realised, or so we hoped. Gary was in a key position for the off, frying pan held in his

## News from our youngest Liveryman

Max is the son of Past Master Matthew Ellis, and writes to tell us about one very interesting day out.

On 3rd December I had the privilege of attending a luncheon at the Old Bailey with His Majesty's Judges at the request of Sheriff and Deputy Keith Bottomley.

Upon arrival through the Lord Mayor's entrance into the courthouse, which is the customary entry way for guests, the group was shown up into the Sheriff's rooms, where we were greeted by the two Sheriffs of the City of London. The reception included a fascinating history of the Old Bailey, which is so called due to the fact that the courthouse is situated alongside the historic location of the ancient Roman wall of the city (the Bailey); and an introduction into the purpose of the invitational lunch, which is held most weekdays to offer an opportunity for members of the public to learn more about the Rule of Law in the United Kingdom (and to give the judges a chance to take an afternoon break from difficult cases).

The Sheriff also discussed the life-changing initiative led by the judges of the courthouse: *No Knives Better Lives*. Many of the cases tried at the Central Criminal Court are murders by knife, increasingly committed by young people. The campaign involves workshops attended by young offenders and by judges, and are held with the purpose of deterring young people from carrying knives. Presentations are also given by past offenders and by family members of victims, which are effective at highlighting the potential effects of this form of crime to the attendees, and in particular the collateral damage caused to family and friends of the victims. The *No Knives Better Lives* campaign displays the essential work that the Old Bailey plays in preventing crime before it finds its way into the courtroom, alongside its central rôle in the UK criminal justice system.

After the reception we were led into lunch, where I had a conversation with the Recorder of London – Mark Lucraft KC. The Recorder is the most senior Circuit Judge at the Old Bailey, holding the responsibility of allocating cases to the Judges. The holder of this office also has a rôle in providing legal advice to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen.



Max Ellis



Max (at the back) with his fellow guests and the Sheriffs

After lunch, and an interesting conversation with the Recorder about the circumstances that may cause certain evidence to be inadmissible at trial, the group was afforded the privilege of attending a trial in progress as guests of the Sheriff. The barristers were in the process of examining witnesses, and I stayed to watch this stage of the trial until the Judge ended the session. The right for members of the public to attend trials forms part of the principle of open justice in the UK, and is critical to ensure trials are conducted in an open and public manner. The ability to exercise this right gave me a fascinating insight into the daily work of the court.

Thank you to the Sheriff and Deputy for the invitation to attend this fascinating lunch. I've certainly come away from it with a better understanding of the workings of the Central Criminal Court, and an appreciation of the judges who preside over the country's most serious crimes.

# The Consort's Ladies Luncheon

The first Framework Knitters Ladies Lunch in three years took place at the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) on Thursday 26th February. Hosted by our very own consort – Mistress Claire Corah – 40 ladies enjoyed a wonderful event in beautiful surroundings in the heart of the City of London.

The HAC is the oldest regiment in the British Army (established in 1537) and its headquarters comprise Armoury House and Artillery Gardens. Some of you will recall that we dined there as a company in June 2018.

On arrival, whilst sipping a welcome glass of champagne, we were treated to a fascinating talk from the Upper Warden – Jonathan Pears – about the history of the hosiery industry in the Midlands. Though light-hearted, by the time he had finished we all felt better informed about the history of the industry with which our Company is so closely associated. He regaled us with some interesting facts about the Reverend William Lee, who is credited with mechanising the knitting process in 1589 – ostensibly because his wife spent far too long knitting and had insufficient time to devote to him! Apparently, a framework knitter in the 18th and early 19th centuries could typically produce around 24 stockings in a 14-hour day (working from 6.00am to 8.00pm): definitely a step up from hand knitting. Our fact for the day was that a pair of ladies' tights has 1,000,000 knitted loops,

approximately four miles of nylon and Lycra yarns and nowadays can be knitted in three minutes flat – reflecting a great deal of progress over the last four hundred years.

Hopefully, we now feel armed with the information we need to fascinate anyone who ask about the origins of framework knitting, its historic importance and the dramatis personae associated with it, including Nathaniel Corah, who started the famous Corah company in 1815.

Jonathan then demonstrated the Griswold sock-knitting machine which he had transported all the way down to London, and we had time to look at a display of various examples of knitwear.

The Mistress then gave a short speech in which she described some of the highlights of her year so far and said how delighted she was to be able to host the Ladies Lunch.

The Upper Warden, the Gallant Clerk and the Master then disappeared – ostensibly for a somewhat humbler repast than the Ladies were anticipating (or that's what they told

us anyway), leaving us to our lunch. Lunch in the stunning Queen's Room was not only delicious but beautifully presented, comprising Bloody Mary classic King Prawn Cocktail, Supreme of Suffolk Chicken with rosemary & thyme, potato anna, wild mushrooms and vegetables, and finishing up with apple cheesecake (in the shape of an apple), oats caramelised apple and honeycomb.

Judging by the noise level, the lunch was a prime example of the conviviality on which we pride ourselves as a Company, and we were all delighted to have been there to enjoy it and grateful to Claire for organising it.



## Cottage Homes Update – A great day for celebration



On Tuesday 24th March, Cottage Homes residents, committee members and guests gathered over coffee in Corah Hall. The Master told us that the original cottages had been built in memory of Leslie Corah, his and Nettie's great uncle, who had given his life in WW1. The employees of N Corah & Sons had raised the money to build the cottages. It was important that the cottages be rebuilt to continue that memory.

Before going over to the new cottages, the Master thanked those who had been involved in the project. First, Eric Royle – one of our residents – had skilfully drawn a copy of the original dedication plaque. The Master showed his appreciation by presenting him with a gift token.

Next, the Master thanked Malcolm Foulkes-Arnold of Corporate Architecture. Having designed and project-managed the building, he was able to re-use the old roof tiles as well as sourcing similar reclaimed tiles.

Craig of S & S Contractors – the building firm – had been very considerate, ensuring noise and dust were kept to a minimum. The cottages look beautiful. Chris Jones, of Wyggeston Almshouses, had very kindly given the Master access to gain ideas for the project.

Various charitable trusts and their trustees had been generous with their time and financial support. The Master thanked Roger Bowder, Kate Hall and Michael Jones of the *Maud Elkington* and *Florence Turner* Trusts, along with the J. Reginald Corah Trust. He also thanked PM Hugh Stevenson as Chairman of the Thomas Stanley Shipman Charitable Trust for his generosity, while the Noskwith family had offered a substantial donation in memory of PM Rolf Noskwith. Last but not least, the Master thanked our Almshouse Charity for its donation.

The Master offered special thanks to Nettie Ellis and Under Warden Paul Bonnett. Nettie had been at the cottage homes on a daily basis, helping with every problem arising from the building work while continuing with her management duties. Paul, as project manager, had been invaluable in overseeing the building work, bringing it in on time and on budget – no mean feat!

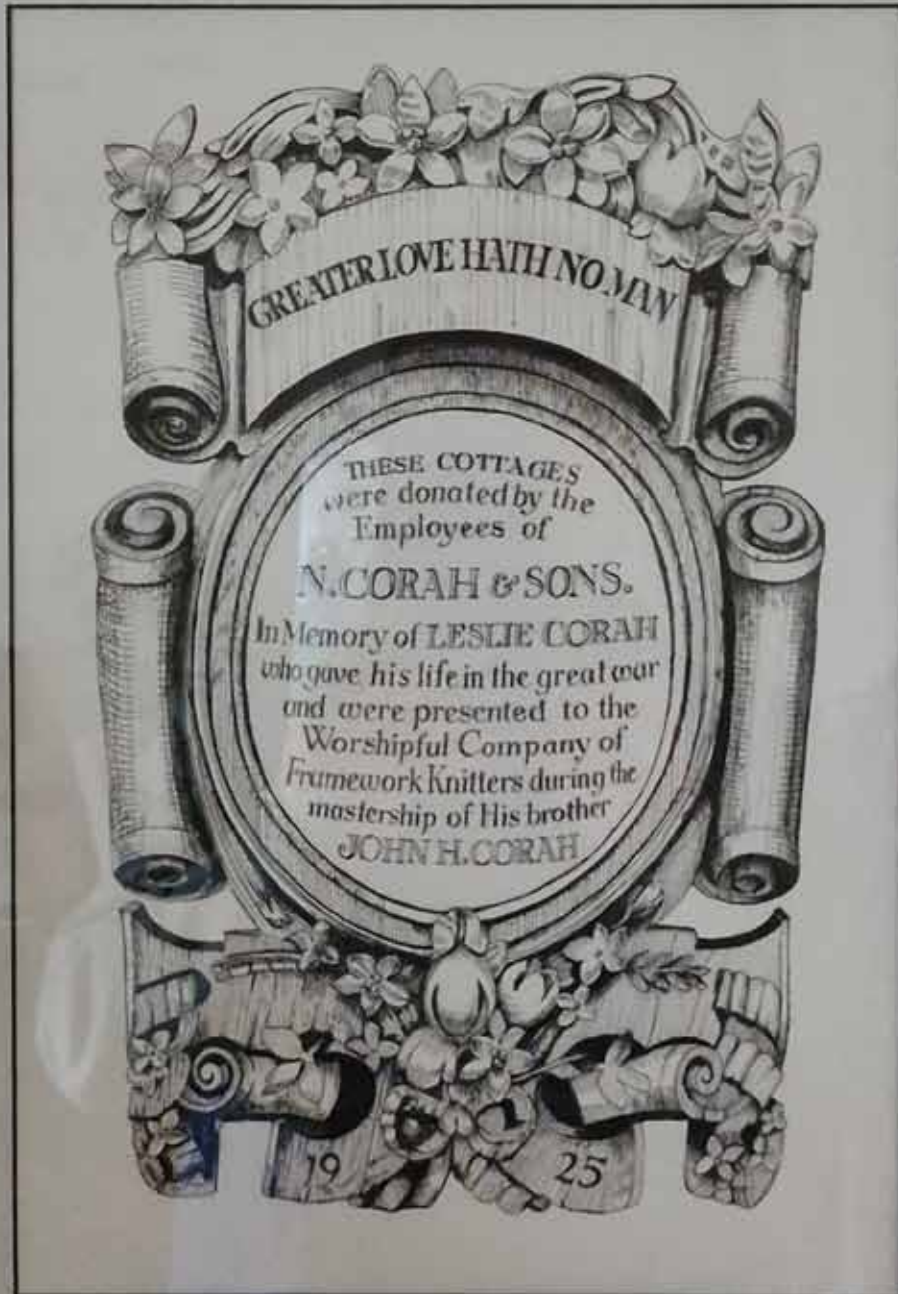
Finally the Master introduced Willie Hartley Russell MVO, DL – the National Chairman of the Almshouses Association. He told us that Willie had visited our Cottage Homes and had been delighted to be asked to open the new cottages. The Master added that residents Elaine & David would very kindly open their new home to us after the formal opening ceremony.

When we assembled outside the new cottages, Willie told us how pleased he was to open the houses. He had started his association with us after meeting Nettie and PM Matthew Ellis. He had also met our oldest resident – Hazel – who had sadly died recently at the age of 102. Willie told us that on average, residents of almshouses live 2½ years longer than others. There are 35,000 almshouses in the UK situated over 2,500 sites. The Trustees and the Wardens take an active interest in the quality of the housing provided and the lives of residents.

With that, Willie removed the brightly-coloured knitted blanket covering the dedication plaque, and Cottages 20 and 21 were formally opened. While some joined Elaine & David in their beautiful new home, others went across to Corah Hall, where a delicious buffet lunch was served. A great day for celebration!



**Helen Woolfe**



Drawn by Eric Royle - Cottage 12  
January 2026

# The David Bryars Award

“The obvious recipient of the David Bryars Award this year was, to me, very clear. Although we have many outstanding contenders for this award who have made considerable contributions to our Livery and should be recognised, there is one stand-out person.

The recipient this year has never been shy in coming forward to devote their time, energy and enthusiasm in furthering the aims of our Livery in a very practical manner; and they have done it willingly and with no thought of recognition or stepping into the limelight.

The award is given in recognition of one area of contribution they make, although there are many. They were handed the ownership of running this initiative as lockdown was lifted, probably under the premise of ‘it will peter out soon’. But it hasn’t, it has only grown.

Of course, I am talking about PM Sheila Turner and the *Knit for the Community* initiative (see also Page 9).

We have knitters North and South, West and East, all being co-ordinated by Sheila and delivering bed and lap blankets to those in need. There must be over 2,500 blankets that have now been distributed, all made with love and care, and given freely to many worthwhile and extremely grateful organisations.

Therefore Sheila, please can you come up and accept the award, and I will leave you wondering how you are going to get it back to Holmfirth.”

Peter Corah, IPM



# Livery Schools Link

*Primary Schools on Monday 2nd March.*

*Secondary Schools on Tuesday 3rd March*

It was the first year we decided to trial participating on both dates: previously we'd only attended on the Secondary School day.

Jonathan gathered all the kit we needed, banners, the Griswold, some blankets and many exciting knit items. He and Peter delivered them to the Guildhall on Sunday in preparation for setting up our stand. Olivia Ruston planned to attend, though work commitments sadly prevented her from joining us, but she was happy to let us borrow some of her work for display. Likewise, Chloe Hodgkinson was keen to be involved, but unable to make it this year, so would like us to keep her posted about it in the future.

A wide range of Livery Companies participated. In the immediate vicinity of our stand were the Clockmakers, Inn Holders (Hoteliers), Bakers and Air Pilots. Some had items to hand out, which were of particular interest to the younger children, to the extent that some approached us asking what we were giving away, being less interested in the knowledge content. A couple of children even surreptitiously tried helping themselves to a football shirt from our display. Peter deftly thwarted them, but we then became very aware of needing to carefully watch and safeguard our stand.

The younger children also crowded around the Griswold and vigorously turned the handle, being less interested in watching how the stitches formed on the needles.

Overall, the Secondary school students asked more considered questions, a few were particularly interested in knit as an area of study to take forward. Tuesday was certainly more productive, and we felt that we were contributing to their career choices and direction.

There were a few children of all ages on both days who had learned how to hand knit or crochet, and were delighted to be in a situation where they could demonstrate their knowledge and skill to their fellow students: that was very heartening.

Dawn Foxhall from the Textiles Skills Centre approached us. Her organisation particularly aims at encouraging Textiles skills learning back into schools. She was keen to stay in contact.

It was a positive event, although we would recommend that it's more applicable for us to participate on just the Secondary School date next year.

**Master Jonathan Pears, IPM Peter Corah and Liveryman Toni Hicks**

# Ruddington Museum Update

## First:

## New leadership at Ruddington Framework Knitters Museum



**Buddy Penfold with Museum Manager David Longford**

Dr. Rebekah Pickering-Wood (Acting Chair of Trustees) opened the AGM in the Chapel Rooms of the Museum in Ruddington, giving a state of the health of the Museum. Many projects are ongoing, not least the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported 'Stitch in Time' project exploring the social history attached to the Museum when it was a working 'frameshop' (factory) over 150 years ago. During the AGM, new Trustees were voted onto the board, including our very own Buddy Penfold. Buddy's impressive biography – supplied to the AGM for voting purposes – told us that she is Associate Professor (Knit) and Deputy Head of School of Design Innovation at De Montfort University, Leicester.

After studying Fashion & Textiles at Liverpool Art College, Buddy was awarded a Royal Society of Arts and Government sponsorship as a designer for industry. Before joining De Montfort University, she worked as Design Director at Burnley PLC leading the strategic creative development.

She has a M.Ed. in diverse teaching methods, has taught undergraduate and postgraduate groups and delivered workshops at international institutions. Buddy is an Education Academy Fellow. Her research interests include diversity within the curriculum, craft and community, and teaching practical subjects online.

Buddy is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Framework Knitters – and we are very proud of her!

**The Master**

# Next:

## An extract from

# *The Rudd – Ruddington's New Village Magazine*

It is good to report that a new team is taking over the leadership at the prize-winning Framework Knitters Museum at Ruddington. Dr. Rebekkah Pickering-Wood is assuming control as the new Chairman of the Trustees of two fellow trustees. Rebekkah is senior lecturer at the Heritage Department at Nottingham Trent University and has extensive experience in museum affairs. David Longford has just begun a stint as museum curator, supported by a 2½ years grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. David comes from a background in theatre, and will bring exciting new ideas to the museum's presentations. Stuart Botterill is continuing his position as the Chairman of the Friends of the Museum – the team of volunteers who keep the show on the road. Stuart is particularly keen on maintaining the traditional craft of framework knitting, on which he has already made himself an expert. Under this inspired leadership, the award-winning museum must continue to go from strength to strength, we can confidently forecast.

The social side of framework knitters' lives was most often invested in local friendly societies, the working mens clubs that pooled their resources to protect their members against sickness, funeral costs and unemployment. There were over a thousand of them recorded in Nottinghamshire alone. They were proudly independent; and in the pubs in which they met, had their own regalia which will be displayed in all its amazing variety in our forthcoming exhibition. Work on this compelling initiative is already underway with the new curator.

The only sad note to record is that Julian Ellis, a former chairman of the trustees, died in May 2025 of prostate cancer. Julian was an eminent knitwear manufacturer and textile engineer, who won distinction producing the knitted implants for orthopedic surgeons, and for an impressive range of other research projects. In retirement, he served as chairman of the Ruddington Museum trustees through the period of major growth after Gun Cottage (between the workshops and the chapel) was acquired and the site redeveloped with the help of several Lottery Heritage Fund agents. Local historians will hope that Greasley Castle – another early framework knitting site – will develop in a comparable way when the present restoration of the buildings is completed.

**Stanley Chapman, Museum President**

# The Big Curry Luncheon

A team of 11 intrepid and enthusiastic Liverymen turned up bright and early, instructed by our Master Elect in his last day as Upper Warden to prepare our stall at the Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch on 16th April. Jonathan Pears had driven down with a car full of merch – as it's called nowadays – for us to sell on the Framework Knitters stall. Using his contacts in the industry, Jonathan had called on his clients to donate produce for our stall, who willingly agreed knowing that all the money raised goes to charity.

And what a motley collection we had: a vast array of socks including some showing Spitfires (highly sought after), Stilton cheese, Heinz Baked Beans, HP Sauce, and various cartoon characters ranging from Peppa and Daddy Pig to Bluey and her sister, Bingo – it was interesting to identify the aficionados of popular children's television programmes amongst us who displayed their superior knowledge (and viewing habits). Other items of knitwear were also available, including beautiful cashmere shawls and jumpers. It's fair to say that the items sold like hot cakes (posing stiff competition for the Baker's Company who were literally selling hot cakes). We raised around £3,800: our second highest total ever. The organisers estimate that at least £430,000 was raised, which makes all the effort worthwhile.

We were pleased to be patronised by a member of the Royal Family – the Duke of Gloucester – who appeared to be delighted with the socks presented to him by the (then) Master, carrying out one of his last duties, and the Master Elect who had had special socks knitted for the Duke.

The Big Curry Lunch has become a great tradition in the City, having been started by the then Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress in 2008. The objective is to raise funds to support veterans of His Majesty's Armed Forces – as of last summer, an impressive £4.2 million had been raised. As well as the money raised, the event is intended to raise awareness of the rôle of the Armed Forces and of the three national service charities which were all represented. It was great to learn about some of the wonderful services they provide on display, and the many Armed Forces personnel who were there throughout the day helping to make it such a success. As someone who has worked closely alongside the Service charities, I have always been impressed by the commitment and dedication they show to serving personnel, their families and to veterans.

Some of us had tickets for the lunch itself and enjoyed the delicious curries served in the Great Hall by service personnel. Judging by the number of diners, this was no mean feat – there were three sittings with 500 diners at each one.

The day was a great success and very enjoyable – there was a variety of other stands to look at, and many of us came away with plants from the Gardeners' Company and baked goods from the Bakers'. But a huge shout must go out to our current Master for the work that he and the rest of the team, including our Gallant Clerk, put into making our contribution such a success. Jonathan sourced all the supplies needed, got them all there (a logistical nightmare), instructed those manning the stand on sizing and pricing, organised all of those attending, and ensured that we were all properly attired in our eye-catching red tabards. The event undoubtedly helps to raise the Company's profile as well as the work of the Armed Forces and associated charities. Thanks also go to the large number of Framework Knitters who turned up to help on our stall.

One of our guests, who shall remain nameless, was spotted at the Installation Dinner sporting one Baked Bean sock and one Tomato Ketchup sock – a bold sartorial statement providing proof that innovation in fashion is alive and well amongst our Livery community. And we were pleased to hear at the dinner that Professor John Schofield (PM Tyler & Bricklayer, and husband of our very own Helen Steele) had won the raffle for which the prize was an enviable £500 to spend on John Smedley knitwear. We look forward to hearing how John chooses to spend his prize.

**Liveryman Claire Bethel**



**The IPM and The Master with  
The Duke of Gloucester**



***THOSE* Socks !!**



**Our Hard-Working & Enthusiastic Team**

# A Post-Installation City Walk

After a wonderful evening at Barber-Surgeons Hall the previous evening, we returned the following morning to the scene of the crime to meet Susannah Cohen, an official City of London Guide, from Square Mile Secrets. The weather could not have been better, with a warm breeze and blue skies, and a convivial group of Liverymen and guests completed the picture.

It transpired that Susannah was, in spirit at least, 'one of us', as she is particularly fond of wearing her bright-pink Pairs socks, which are made by a customer of The Master – J Alex Swift Ltd, in Hathern, near Loughborough, Leicestershire, for the Pairs brand. [See [Pairs Socks | Upgrade Your Sock Drawer](#) if you'd like a pair yourself !!]



Susannah began by giving us a brief history of the City, beginning at pre-roman times, and explained what we were going to see on our walk. We then set off at a brisk pace, stopping first to admire the roman wall by part of the Barbican.

Next was a series of interesting buildings with textile connections. Many of the 'Great Twelve' have textile origins, of course, although some of the place names are less obvious: for example, Threadneedle Street (home of the Bank of England, which we were to pass near the end of our journey) gets its name from a direct reference to the tailoring trade that once flourished there.

During our walk we learned about the historical textile industry of J & R Morley, a firm of hosiery manufacturers of Nottingham. The company takes its name from John and Richard Morley. These

brothers were born in the old Manor House next to St. Stephen's Church, Sneinton, but we were to see Morley's gigantic warehouses, on the corner of Milk Street and Gresham Street. Sadly, perhaps, the company was taken over by Courtaulds in 1968, and the name all but disappeared, save for the name of the warehouse.

And there were some other interesting sites to visit. For example, we found ourselves in the city gardens of St. Mary Aldermanbury, where we saw a statue dedicated to William Shakespeare – not something we were expecting !!

Passing round the side of St. Paul's Cathedral, we unexpectedly came across a group of Morris Dancers – the Madder Mill Molly, from Carshalton – which in a curious way summed up our historic visit to the City.

Finally, leaving the cathedral we repaired, appropriately, to Ye Old London pub, where most of us enjoyed a hearty traditional luncheon.



**PME Paul Bethel**



**Part of the Roman Wall**



**And a descriptive Plaque**

**Susannah Cohen**



**The Bard**



**and The Morris Dancers**

# Dates for your diary

## 2026

24th June	Common Hall: Election of the Sheriffs	The Clerk
27th June	Glovers' Inter-Livery Golf Croquet Competition, Southwick	The Clerk

### 2nd to 5th July – The Leicester Weekend

2nd July	Golf Day & Dinner	The Clerk
3rd July	Pétanque & Dinner, The Old Black Horse, Houghton on the Hill	The Clerk
4th July	Morning – The Court	The Clerk
	Evening – Dinner at the Leicester Novotel	The Clerk
5th July	Church Service, followed by the famous Barbecue at the Cottage Homes	

16th July	Brigantes Breakfast, Leeds	See Below
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### 4th to 6th September – The Master's Weekend

4th September	Pentrich Revolution & Dinner	The Master
5th September	Morning – The Great British Car Journey: A Tour through British Motoring History Later that morning – a visit to White Peaks Distillery Afternoon – A bus tour through the Pentrich Revolution: Luddites, Lord Byron, etc. Evening – Dinner	The Master

6th September	Sunday luncheon on the Great Central Railway, starting at Loughborough	The Master
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27th September	Inter-Livery Sheep Drive	The Clerk
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28th September	Admission of the Sheriffs, Guildhall	The Clerk
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29th September	Common Hall for the Election of The Lord Mayor, Guildhall	The Clerk
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16th October	Court & Banquet in Haberdashers' Hall	The Clerk
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17th October	Outing, TBA	The Clerk
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13th November	Silent Ceremony for admission of the Lord Mayor, Guildhall	The Clerk
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14th November	The Lord Mayor's Show	The Clerk
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## 2027

22nd January	Morning – Winter Court Luncheon – The Naval & Military Club (aka 'The In & Out')	The Clerk
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16th April	Installation Court, Vintners' Hall	The Clerk
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### 2nd to 4th July – The Leicester Weekend

15th October	Court & Civic Banquet, Fishmongers' Hall	The Clerk
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## 2028

21st January	Winter Court & Luncheon, Grocers' Hall	The Clerk
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## Brigantes Events:

For further details of Brigantes Events, please email the organisers at [livery@brigantes.org.uk](mailto:livery@brigantes.org.uk), where you can also ask to sign up for their Newsletter.

## Booking Events

Please remember that further details of most of the above events – and more – can be found in the Members' section of our website.

And more importantly, most can (and should, if possible) be booked through the website too: this not only ensures that your booking is recorded but will also give you an emailed confirmation of your booking for your records.

## And Your Events

Do you know of an event that's not shown above that you think might interest your fellow Liverymen? Or are you thinking of organising an event yourself? Perhaps there's an event that you'd like to see in the future?

If any of the above applies to you, do get in touch with the Social Committee, who are always delighted to receive suggestions for the diary.