

# THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF PLAISTERERS

## ***WORKING TOGETHER—THE LIVERY: THE CITY CORPORATION: THE MAYORALTY***



### Article 76

## THE LORD MAYOR'S PATRONAGES AND EXTERNAL ROLES



The vast majority of events attended by the Lord Mayor start with the host commending the Lord Mayor on his or her busy schedule. That is very true but what is not always clear is exactly what the Lord Mayor does. Previous articles have touched on this (articles 40 and 69) but this month I want to expound the many patronages and external roles that the Lord Mayor holds for his or her year of office and who equally demand Mayoral time over the course of the year.

These roles are exemplified by the Lord Mayor's position as Rector of City University - a role in which he was installed on January 29th this year at the Barbican Centre. The City University was previously the Northampton Institute, based in Northampton Square just to the north of the City. City Livery Companies have been involved with the Institute for many years - representing their trades and associations and many are still involved. The Skinners and Saddlers supported the original establishment. Thus it was appropriate for the Lord Mayor to be appointed annually as their Rector in order to continue these links - whereas the University has now extended its studies to match the world leading financial and professional institutions on its City doorstep. The Lord Mayor is also Vice President of Birkbeck College.



The City University Mace

Another close link with the historic Livery foundations is the Lord Mayor's role as an ex officio councillor of The City and Guilds of London Institute. A body that includes other leaders of important bodies - eg the President of the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society. Also represented on the Council are 18 Livery Companies who are chosen depending on their respective donations to the Institute!

The Lord Mayor is the Patron of the City Livery Club. In this role he or she is invited to the Club's civic lunch or dinner each year. Since 2014 the Lord Mayor has been able to use this event to present the Club's Root and Branch Award to an exemplary Liveryman that has been nominated by a Livery company and chosen by the Club to receive this honour. The Lord Mayor is also the Patron of the Royal Society of St George (City of London branch) whose banquet, on the last evening before Christmas, the Lord Mayor hosts in the Mansion House. The Lord Mayor is also patron of the Guild of Freemen.



The Lord Mayor is Admiral of the Port of London. It is not surprising to learn that the Lord Mayor has such a close link with the River Thames and the Port of London as the trading hub for the UK that it once was. The Lord Mayor has a pennant that will fly on any craft in which he or she is carried and on occasion has even steered a boat on the River (see photo). Each year the Admiral of the Port's Challenge is held - this was a race inaugurated by the Lord Mayor and is contested by traditional Thames Waterman's Cutters. In keeping with the concept of traditional rowing, it has fixed seats for up to six rowers and room for a cox and passengers. It is also simply adapted to the role of Ceremonial Livery barge with extra seating for passengers under a stern canopy. In this form the Cutter closely resembles the decorated craft often seen in historical scenes of the Thames in earlier centuries. This event is raced from the Palace of Westminster to Westminster Boating Base, a distance of 1.33 statute miles. The rules require that the Cutters are rowed by four oars, must be rigged with their ceremonial canopies and flags, and must carry two passengers. The Lord Mayor as Admiral attends but is not required to row.

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The Lord Mayor is the Patron of the London Road Safety Council. This organisation brings together elected members and road safety officers from each of the 32 London Boroughs and the City of London. It is unusual for organisations to mix elected members and officers but the ability of these two groups to work together as equal members is useful to share best practice and get things done. The Lord Mayor was helpful in the Council's celebration of its 100 years of work in 2017. The author is the City's representative and Chair of its Executive Committee.



The Lord Mayor at Christ's Hospital

The Lord Mayor has a close association with many charities for historical and other reasons. He or she is the Vice President of the Court of Governors of Christ's Hospital Foundation. The President is HRH the Duke of Gloucester. The Lord Mayor and Sheriffs attend in state at the annual Speech Day in May at the school. The links go back to the founding of the School when in 1552, the young King Edward VI responded to an impassioned sermon on the needs of London's poor, and summoned the preacher, the Bishop of London, to talk more about this pressing situation. It was suggested that Edward should write to the Lord Mayor of London, to set in motion charitable measures to help the poor. Christ's Hospital was consequently founded in the old buildings vacated by the Grey Friars in Newgate Street, London and provided food, clothing, lodging and learning for children without any means.

The Lord Mayor's links with the military and Church are several and include as patron of The Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Greater London; vice president ex officio of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society; co- President of the Friends of St Paul's Cathedral (with the Bishop) and co- President of Heart of the City (with the Governor of the Bank of England).

Some links arise from the actions of previous Lord Mayors. For example the Lord Mayor is the Patron of the Kennedy Memorial Trust due to the fact that the Lord Mayor in 1963 was asked to launch the appeal for funds following President Kennedy's assassination. That was a national appeal for funds for an appropriate memorial to honour the President in the UK. The Fund provides scholarships and research grants. The Lord Mayor is also an Honorary Trustee of the Treloar Trust- and an annual visit is made by the Lord Mayor with the Masters of all the Livery Companies to see the College in Hampshire. The College was founded in 1907 by Lord Treloar, then Lord Mayor.

The links with organisations partly funded or run by the City Corporation might be a more obvious link. The Lord Mayor is Patron of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (article 20) and an ex officio member of many of the Corporation's internal committees - most of which he will not have time to attend but with whom he keeps a close link. Included in these is the City Bridge Trust - the Committee chaired by the author that distributes grants across Greater London (see article 16).

When I add that to the list of such appointments it is much longer than summarised here and you will see the truth about the Lord Mayor's busy schedule.



Article by Upper Warden,  
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