



Newsletter

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FARMERS



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Building bridges with the London City Farms

Take a trip to Surrey Docks Farm, with which the WCF has strong charitable links, including donating calves, time and money. Its reach and impact on city families is unparalleled.

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Meet the new Master - Richard Crane

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Learning about the Livery Familiarisation Day

What does the Livery movement really do and why is it relevant to today's society? Find out about the history of Livery Companies and all of the good work undertaken by the WCF.

L-R: Rev Canon William Gulliford, Ted Prior the Beadle, Clerk Graham Bamford, Senior Warden Jeremy Finnis DL, the new Master Richard Crane, the new Chaplain Geoff Dodgson, the Junior Warden Christopher Day and Father Taylor Wilton-Morgan.



The WCF and Bedfordshire farmer Tim Burton donated two calves to Surrey Docks Farm

Past Master's Musings

A year has gone and this Master must go too - what a year it has been. You take on the role not quite knowing what lies ahead and with bemused looks from your family, you charge into the Livery world, hook, line and sinker! Catriona and our children have been a huge support throughout the year - massive thanks to them, I couldn't have taken it on without them.

The Livery world outside The Farmers is hugely varied and, in many ways, different to ours. We are a membership organisation based largely outside the Home Counties, but most Liverymen in other Companies live closer to London and their trades are/were in London. Well, I can tell you, we punch above our weight!

Our education courses set us apart from many of the modern Liveries (those since 1936) who do not offer them. And our reach into areas of our industry runs deeper than many, particularly of course those with ancient trades now gone.

We are exceptionally active with all our initiatives, in health and wellbeing, with the London City Farms and with the many other individuals and charities we support. We are prudent in giving to the latter, but are increasingly focusing our philanthropic activities on all those connected with education in food and farming.

There have been so many highlights I could mention; I have attended around 250 events/meetings in the



L-R: Rowan Brogden, Madeleine Murphy, Catriona and Guy Brogden, Laura Brogden and Archie Brogden

year; not all Masters can/do attend so many, although some attend more. But when we get together, the biggest 'take away' for me has been the enormous fellowship we have between us and the fun and laughter we have along the way.

I want to make special mention here to all those involved in keeping the show on the road; to our Clerks Graham and Duncan who work tirelessly for us, to my Chaplain William for his wise counsel, to Ted our Beadle, to all the staff at 3 Cloth Street, to our Court and committees for making my year trouble-free, and to you all, for your support at functions, events and to me personally.

It has truly been an honour and a privilege to serve you, to represent the Livery in the City of London and further

afield, and increase our reputation (hopefully!) with the institutions representing our industry. Thank you.

As I pass the baton to our new Master, Richard Crane, I wish him a very enjoyable and successful year - I know we are in capable hands.

Apparently, we are known as 'the friendly Livery' - long may that continue. And please do encourage more of your friends and family to become Liverymen and join in the fun!



L-R: Jeremy Finnis DL, Gemma Hooper, Guy Brogden, Cathy Maund, Chris Pounds and Richard Crane



Passing on the baton at the Installation Dinner

Building bridges with City Farms

On a cool, rainy day a group of 18 Liverymen from the Company set off for a visit to the Surrey Docks Farm (SDF), ably led by Stuart Philpot.

The WCF has had links with and supported the SDF for over 30 years, during which time it has grown into the bustling farm it is today. Two of the key roles we are pleased to see it performing so well are engaging those who might be less able in society than us, and bringing an awareness and understanding of food, farming and nature to those with little or no exposure to it.

Upon arrival at the 2.2-acre city site we were welcomed by Farm Manager Gemma Hooper and Animals Manager Claire Ellis-Elson, who have been there 12 and 33 years, respectively. Gemma is flourishing in her role, doubtless partly due to the expert guidance of Richard Whitlock (PM 20/21). She went on our CRL course in 2019 and says she especially benefited from learning how to improve her management of people and leading groups.

After meeting some of the special needs volunteers we moved to the forge, then on to look at the specially constructed brick oven. This enables anyone to cook their own pizzas, often using farm-grown ingredients for toppings. This is especially valuable, as some families have little in the way of cooking facilities, often just a microwave.

Gemma and Claire told us about the education which school groups (and



Surrey Docks Farm helps to educate the public about farming and food, while providing vital green space

their teachers!) get, hearing about what animals eat, which meat is produced, how animals feed their young and much more.

Animal petting is strongly encouraged, as many children have never seen farm animals let alone touched one. Bottle feeding lambs and 'animal experiences' produce much-needed income. The whole environment is so utterly different from paved streets and blocks of flats.

An example of WCF support was when lottery funding was won to facilitate a mobile farm lorry to enable the SDF to set up in school playgrounds; the WCF also funded and advised on the

purchase of hurdles to build pens for the animals.

James, horticulturist of 30 years at City Farm, gave us an insight into the farm's management of the muck heap – the farm makes and sells its own compost – and he described more about the ingenious rain water harvesting methods and the onsite biodigester.

The farm supports two apprentices for an 18 month course; one in agriculture and one horticulture, both of whom help with the management of the farm. This is yet another way in which the farm can support people needing a start. All together an informative and uplifting day.

Harvest feel-good factor at Lambourne End

Saturday 21 September saw the annual gathering of the City Farms staff and supporters at the Lambourne End Centre for Outdoor Learning in Essex.

Some 200 people gathered on a lovely sunny day to join in with the craft, animal and vegetable competitions and the various activities put on by Centre Manager Rob Gayler and his team.

The Lambourne Centre is a 54-acre farm and countryside facility, with full residential accommodation for 40 people. Some 10,000 young people experience its wonderful facilities each

year. The Master, Wardens, Robert Sears, and David and Mary Bolton were treated to a tour of the facility and a delicious BBQ lunch. We were shown a most moving video of the results of the work that is done at Lambourne, which changes the lives of so many youngsters who might otherwise fall into a cycle of despair or even worse.

It would be fair to say that we all left the event with a feeling that so much unsung good work goes on, and that so much more could be done. To find out more visit lambourne-end.org.uk.



Lambourne End caters for 10,000 youngsters per year

The Summer Visit: Touring Oxfordshire

The Master invited approximately 60 Liverymen, their partners and guests to Oxfordshire for the 2024 Summer Visit. A packed programme commenced with an interesting cruise on the Isis (that's the Thames to non-Oxford people), past the University boathouses, up to Donnington Bridge and back.

Fellowship was much enhanced as we huddled together under a somewhat inadequate canopy during a deluge of rain. The Junior Warden regaled any who would listen about his own rowing prowess at University College in the 1970s!

All were suitably warmed up during the following reception at Brasenose College. Here, we learned about the history of the College, and especially the magnificent Chapel. Dinner in the Smith Reading Room was almost red wine free due to the sensitivity of the College about the ancient stone floor. The Master's honeyed pleas were, luckily, successful - red wine was served and none spilled.



The magnificent ceiling at Brasenose Chapel

The following day dawned bright and clear, perfect weather for our visit to Blenheim Palace. We toured the Estate, hearing from a very young, dynamic management team about the aspirations of the Estate to become carbon and energy neutral. The 12,000 acres at Blenheim - 2,000 of which are a World Heritage Site - were being transformed into an exemplar of modern agricultural and forestry management, coupled with state-of



About 60 Liverymen, partners and guests attended the packed programme in Oxfordshire



Above: Blenheim Palace. Right: Blenheim Estate

-the-art carbon and energy technology. The engagement with the local community was impressive, with an estimated £160m being contributed annually in goods and services, and 3500 jobs supported.

The tour of the main house was - as you would expect - breathtaking in the opulence of both the fabric of the building (especially the unique stone carving by Grinling Gibbons)



Dinners were particularly convivial

and the interiors. The bed where Winston Churchill was born was an intimate highlight.

Dinner followed the tour in the beautiful linenfold-panelled dining room of Weston Manor. The Master had devised an after-dinner quiz based on the day's activities to check that we were paying full attention. After several unexpected tied answers, a winning table emerged to both catcalls and merriment.



The final day saw us at nearby 700-pupil Radley College where we were shown round by their top team. The wonderful school buildings (the original Mansion was especially impressive) are surrounded by some 800 acres of farmland, which the school is now actively managing with regenerative techniques. The engagement of the farm with less privileged and excluded schoolchildren via its Countryside Centre was particularly impressive.

The trip ended with a delicious buffet in the Countryside Centre, after which we departed, with much to absorb from a fascinating few days.

The summer trip to Sicily

The Master, 34 Liverymen and guests left a cold and wet Blighty on 8 June and landed in rather contrasting 30°C sunshine at Palermo airport.

A short coach trip brought us to the magnificent Norman cathedral in Monreale, famed for its extravagantly lavish decoration, perhaps a little rich for austere English tastes. We then moved on to our accommodation in the medieval town of Marsala – famed for its eponymous fortified wine, a sample of which awaited us in our rooms.

Day two saw us out bright and early for a short voyage to the Egadi Islands off the west coast of Sicily. Some brave souls had a dip in the rather chilly Med while anchored off Levanzo although the majority looked on in awe. Lunch on board was accompanied by wine served in re-used water bottles; happily the content of these unpromising containers was surprisingly potable.

The next day dawned bright and clear once again as we headed off



for a fascinating tour of the Pellegrino winery, where many of us were so impressed by the product that we bought several bottles. We moved on after lunch to the beautifully well-preserved Greek remains at Segesta. The views from the theatre (a mini-Epidauros) were breathtaking, only spoiled by a new motorway snaking through the middle distance (photo left).



Our final day was spent weaving through the many salt pans along the Trapani coast, spotting the odd flamingo along the way, before boarding the small ferry to the island of Mozia. The highlight was the remarkable Greek sculpture in marble of a charioteer (above).

In the afternoon the party climbed its way through the cobbled streets of the walled town of Erice, to be rewarded by some astonishing views over the whole of Trapani.

All commented on how wonderful a trip this was, fostering lasting fellowship as well as considerable historical scholarship.

Profuse thanks must go to Maggi of Windows on the Wild for the organisation of the trip and to our Clerk and Assistant Clerk for ensuring its smooth running.



HRH names new Pendolino train

On an overcast morning in May, a merry gang of people assembled at Paddington Station to witness the naming of the new HRH Princess Royal 'Pendolino' train for Great Western Railways.

As the only representatives from the Livery world, the Master and his wife were invited to witness the unveiling and were then presented to Her Royal Highness. Asked why GWR had been so successful over the years, she showed her mettle by saying it was down to "us farmers" and the overnight milk trains which ran from West Country farms! Altogether, it was a great morning out.



The Princess Royal greeting the Master

Nuffield dinner

On 11 April the Master hosted a dinner to celebrate the success of the Nuffield Farming Scholars who are jointly sponsored by the WCF and Savills.

During the evening, the two current Scholars, Jim Bliss and Jamie Stokes provided an inspiring update on their projects and travels. Rupert Alers-Hankey, Director of the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust, set out his plans for the Trust over the coming years.

Liveryman Andrew Wraith says: "It was an excellent evening which confirmed both the high calibre of Scholars and the value of the Nuffield programme."

A sparkling outing to Raimes Vineyard

We could have been in Épernay; spring sunshine bounced on the soft green leaves of row upon row of vines growing on thin chalky soil. We sat in a chic tasting barn comparing a classic sparkling wine with a Blanc de Noir from the same vineyard whilst nibbling cheese and olives.

But we hadn't had to travel quite as far as northern France; we were in Hampshire, sampling some of the prize-winning produce of the Raimes Vineyard with our host, Augusta (Gussie) Raimes and an enthusiastic group of Liverymen, alumni and guests.

Gussie – whose father is an alumnus of the ACABM course – is the fifth generation of her family to farm here and the first to grow wine. This bold diversification came about after the family was approached some 15 years ago by two separate parties interested in buying their land to plant vines. Both had identified the chalk soil as being of the same rock formation that runs under the Channel and across the Champagne region.

The land was not for sale, but a new idea was born, and soon after Gussie went to Plumpton College to train in viticulture. The first vines were planted in 2011 and their wines have been winning prizes since 2016.

On a tour of the vineyard, Gussie explained some of the challenges that grape growers in Britain face. Firstly, it is incredibly labour-intensive: Much of the work is done by hand, including pruning, de-leafing and the all-important harvest.

Post-Brexit, it is more difficult to find suitable workers, and although some of the Raimes team are local people



The visitors were treated to a tour of the vineyard, learning how to cultivate, harvest and process the grapes

who now return year after year, labour remains a challenge.

Secondly, the weather must play ball: Ideally the vines want a cold, dry winter to promote dormancy; a warm, wet spring to reduce the risk of frost; a sunny June for flowering and a long, warm summer and autumn for fruit maturation and harvest. Frost is a serious threat, but the preferred solution here is surprisingly low-tech: They favour using bougies, which are large candles set out at intervals along the rows, creating just enough heat and air movement to ward off the risk of frost damage to vulnerable buds.

We were introduced to the three classic champagne grapes: Chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier (the latter two being black varieties). Each is harvested, pressed and matured separately, and the real skill comes when Gussie tastes the three still wines and blends them for final maturation in the bottle into either a 'classic' or rosé sparkling wine using all three grapes, or a Blanc de Noirs, which is a blend of the two black varieties. The vineyard also produces a Blanc de Blanc, which is 100% chardonnay.

Climate change is already having an impact on sparkling wine production as summer temperatures rise in France, forcing earlier harvests which can adversely impact taste and quality. For

now, this represents an opportunity for British growers and some French houses have already bought land in England and the US to spread their risk.

Back in the tasting barn we tried to decipher notes of jasmine and elderflower in the nose as we compared the green apple freshness of the classic wine with the red apple complexity of the Blanc de Noirs.



Tasting notes were all part of the experience

A delicious lunch platter of cheese, charcuterie and bread was the perfect accompaniment and it was tempting to simply stay there for the rest of the day. Sadly we had to leave. Our Master Guy Brogden thanked Gussie and her team for the fascinating tour and excellent hospitality. Thanks also to Assistant Clerk Duncan Couper for organising such an enjoyable outing. Next time I shall organise a driver....



The annual Sheep Drive

The annual City of London Sheep Drive took place in September across Southwark Bridge. This is open to all Freeman of the City of London who wish exercise their right to move sheep across the River Thames.

It's a popular event and this year the WCF was represented by the Chennells family from Lincolnshire.

The guest celebrity was actor, musician and Freeman of the City of London Damian Lewis, wearing his grandfather's woollen overcoat to mark the occasion. Damian's half-brother Sir William Russell was Lord Mayor in 2019 before Woolman Vincent Keaveny.



Above: L-R the Lord Mayor Prof Michael Mainelli; Grace Abba, Master of the Young Freeman; Damian Lewis, and the Master of the Woolmen Manny Cohen (Photo courtesy of Tory Manuel of the Woolmen)



Left: Damian Lewis driving sheep

Right: Liveryman Michael Chennells and his wife Diane and daughters Libby and Katie before the drive commenced



The Inter-Livery clay day



The rain (just) kept off for the annual clay shoot, held at the West London Shooting School on 16 May.

The WCF fielded two teams of four, ably captained by Peter Craven for his second year.

A well-organised two days saw 103 teams shooting over 12 stands of varying type and difficulty, with four-man and two-man flushes in between.

The overall competition was won by the Watermen, with Farmers B coming second of the 'non-Livery' teams – our best result for years. Guest gun George

Hurrell did really well, coming 14th overall, out of 412 participants. Your captain wasn't too shabby either, with a score of 45, coming in the middle order.

A fun day was rounded off with the customary supper at Boisdales, courtesy of ex-captain and Past Master Tony Alston.

Left: Jeremy Finnis DL

Right: (L-R) Peter Craven, Stuart Philpot, and hopefully Liveryman in the making, Kiryon Skippen and George Hurrell, friends through IAGM and WCF courses



Vision of the future on Raynham Estate

On 1 October, a day of intermittent biblical rainfall and strong winds, our attention was happily diverted by a fascinating visit to the Raynham Estate, near Fakenham in Norfolk.

Liveryman Viscount Thomas Raynham, known as Tom, introduced himself in the newly constructed barn/restaurant facility at The Copse. This dining facility is one of the many new innovative projects Tom has introduced since returning to the estate and taking it over in 2016. Farm manager Tom Pearson then took over as we toured round the estate.

Ever since Tom's long-ago predecessor, 'Turnip' Townshend owned the Raynham Estate in the 1730s, it has been a champion of innovation and an early adopter of cutting-edge technologies. Turnip Townshend introduced the four-rotation cropping system, and now a seven-year rotation system containing root and cereal crops has been introduced.

Raynham Estate has long recognised the importance of protecting the environment and a commitment to renewable energy is a key part of the approach to reducing the estate's carbon footprint. On the southern part of the 4,200-acre estate the old West Raynham airfield has been reclaimed from the MOD, and 233 acres is now a 50MW solar farm, producing sufficient energy to power approximately 14,000 homes.

Also producing power is a large AD plant which, as well as producing liquid



Raynham Estate has historic roots, but its approach to farming is absolutely cutting-edge

digestate, helps heat 4,000 homes; 50% of this plant was sold in 2022. The liquid digestate is then pumped around much of the farm through an underground umbilical system. The use of this organic fertiliser has improved soil health, reduced reliance on artificial fertiliser by half and use of chemicals by 20%.

The 625-head beef suckler herd supplies the premium market and is in part grazed in fenced fields, and part digitally ringfenced. This innovative method involves the cattle wearing a digital collar; the available grazing area is controlled invisibly by an app on Tom's phone!

This required 'cow training' but now all seems to run smoothly.

The grassland is part of two higher tier Countryside Stewardship schemes, which includes reverting some grassland to the former parkland of the 1700s. The other aim of replanting the parkland is to implement a system which can sustain itself in the event of government support being drastically reduced.

Other income streams include the housing of 600,000 broiler birds on two sites which are both let out, over 40 lettable residential properties, 12 commercial units and an indoor self-storage container site.

With great support from Natural England the lake has been de-silted and listed walls rebuilt. Approximately 4,200m of traditional iron rail fencing has also been put up – this is made on site during the winter.

Further investment and future proofing includes planning permission for a 120,000m³ reservoir to be built to allow for winter abstraction, a purpose built cattle building for calving and winter housing, and a purpose built spray filling store.

All the above is managed by five full-time staff within arable, two full-time within beef and five full-time in the central estate office. Events and glamping require a few part-time seasonal staff. A remarkable operation led by a visionary team.



Tom Pearson, farm manager at Raynham, addresses the WCF visitors

Expanding awareness through YouTube

Liveryman James Peck has built up a substantial agri-business over the past 20 years, and this year he has taken to YouTube to get his farming message across, which has made a profound impact. This article explains the thinking behind James' groundbreaking decision to employ a media manager to hit home.

James and PX Farms Ltd started as a traditional farming business, rooted in a passion for sustainable agriculture and a commitment to producing high-quality produce. Back in 2003, after studying at Lackham Agricultural College and Writtle College, and having managed Peck's Contracting Services for five years, James took on the family farm. It comprised 750 acres plus 150 acres under contract.

Now he runs a 51-strong team and farms 12,500 acres (8500 around Cambridge, 2000 in Lincolnshire and 2000 in Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire) with a mixture of rented, owned land and contract farming.

In an effort to connect more deeply with the public and stakeholders, James created a YouTube channel that would serve as an educational platform. The goal was to unlock the mysteries of farming, highlighting both the daily successes and challenges farmers face. It was also designed to engage with policymakers, offering them a transparent view of the agricultural industry to guide decisions that affect farmers like James.

Within just three months, the YouTube channel attracted over 15,000 subscribers, with individual videos



James Peck (R) employed Tom Cussell (L) as his media manager, elevating his YouTube channel to a new level

gaining more than 75,000 views each. The content resonates with farmers and non-farmers alike, because of its transparency in depicting real-world farming experiences. People are curious about the complexities of agriculture and James has successfully tapped into that curiosity by showing the raw, unscripted realities of farming life.

The channel has opened up numerous opportunities. One of the most significant is increased business visibility, not just locally but globally. The growing subscriber base includes people from various sectors - students, aspiring farmers, environmentalists, and even corporate stakeholders interested in agriculture.

The questions asked by viewers have also provided valuable insights, helping James better understand his audience and respond to their needs, whether it's answering queries about farming

techniques or discussing agricultural policy. Additionally, the channel has attracted potential partners and collaborators.

Whether they're agribusiness companies looking for insights into sustainable practices, or educational institutions interested in using the content for training purposes, it has broadened the business's reach in ways traditional marketing never could.

The YouTube channel has proven to be a powerful tool for growth, not only in terms of visibility but also in creating a deeper connection with the public. It has given the business an authentic voice, one that resonates with a wide audience and builds trust.

Beyond the views and subscribers, it has elevated James and PX Farms as lead thinkers in the farming community, influencing public perception and, hopefully, policymaking.

Lincolnshire show drinks reception

The third annual Lincolnshire Show drinks reception was held at the CLA marquee on 19 June, the first day of the two-day agricultural show.

The reception, which brings together the Lincolnshire agricultural community, had record attendance this year. Guests included Liverymen and Alumni, CLA members, and Fellows and Associates of CARAS. In addition, several people who have shown interest in the Livery



courses were invited to meet past delegates. Gavin Lane, Deputy President of the CLA, welcomed everyone to the Reception.

The Master, Guy Brogden replied on behalf of the WCF, and Andrew Blenkiron, Chair of the English Panel, gave an overview of the work done by CARAS.

The CLA has kindly offered to host the reception again in 2025, on Wednesday 18 June.

Meet the new Master: Richard Crane

By the time you read this I will have been installed as your new Master serving our Livery for what promises to be a very engaging, busy and fun year – hopefully for all concerned!

So, what has brought me to have this great honour to represent all of you? I was born at Manor Farm, Halloughton, near Southwell in Nottinghamshire to a solicitor-cum-farmer father and his wonderful wife, my Mum. She is also my current farming partner and still lives in the house in which I was born and brought up with my three sisters.

Not being great at school or very sociable, I spent nearly all my school holidays ‘working’ on the farm, which was then a mixed suckler beef and cereals farm. I recall my father being very cross with the farm staff for allowing me to drive a tractor (all of a Massey 135 or 165) before I was 13.

However, after that I worked many harvests and looked after the stock, especially over Christmas when the men were off. It's these happy memories which instilled my love for farming and the countryside, which have since become the core of my life and career.

I just made it to Edinburgh University to read agriculture and loved it there, really finding my feet. Determined not to be a professional like my father, I started my career as an agricultural advisory officer at ADAS, initially based in Northallerton, seeding a lifelong love of North Yorkshire until I moved to the slightly less attractive Huntington.

Somehow the professional genes kicked in and I decided to join Vincent Hedley Lewis at Spicers in Cambridge and have a go at becoming a farm accountant. Over my 30 years practising there the organisation morphed into Deloitte where, over the second half of my stint, I worked as a partner leading the Food and Farming practice.

Just as I was considering moving back to Nottingham, I met my now wife Caroline, who farmed around Cambridge as Chivers Farms, in an altogether more serious way than we did in Notts. So, Cambridge it was, and we have lived on the farm ever since, bringing up three now adult children; Emily - a doctor, Will in real estate and Ed, who has just graduated from



Edinburgh. My introduction to the Livery was courtesy of Vincent, who sent me on what was the first Challenge of Rural Leadership course in 1996. It made a big impact on me and, in a sense of giving back, I joined the Livery in 2001 – clothed by the then Princess Anne, our Master at the time.

A little over 10 years later I joined the finance committee and eventually became Chairman in 2016. It was an eventful few years, mostly consisting of dealing with both our Hall and what was then Farmers and Fletchers Hall Ltd (FFHL) when trading was not good and finances were tight. Covid came and we wiped the slate clean, winding up FFHL and starting out with Graysons – all the time building relationships and working ever more closely with the Fletchers.

Pleasing to say now – touching wood – the finances and the Hall have stabilised and, if I take my prudent accountant hat off, are both not too bad. I continue to chair the Hall stakeholder group so am still keeping an ongoing close interest.

Other notable developments over the past 10 years have included the creation of our Alumni Association and reorganisation of our Charity's governance. I am hoping to add to this with our ‘Tri-master’ initiative, raising the depth and breadth of our work with all City Farms, and Surrey Docks Farm (SDF) in particular. Past Master Guy Brogden got the ball well and truly

rolling in his year, and it will be the theme of my year to build upon that.

Specifically, this will consist of creating a dedicated City Farms fund in our Charity, supporting the wider City Farms movement in London (there are 11 such farms) as well as deepening the work we do with SDF to enable them to help even greater numbers of challenged children and adults.

It will be SDF's 50th anniversary in 2025 and we look forward to celebrating it with them next summer. We very much hope you and your family and friends will join us there. I also look forward to passing the City Farms baton on to our Senior Warden, Jeremy Finnis, next year and supporting him in the completion of our three-year plan - and in particular his emphasis on getting more London children out on farms.

In the meantime, I will do my very best to represent the Livery and farming in the City and beyond. We have so much of increasing interest going on – in a large way due to all those on Court and serving on committees, without whom we would not be the wonderful Livery we are. I am very much in their debt.

We run many events, either in the City or out and about at our show receptions and estate walks, which are run in conjunction with our brilliant Alumni Association, and I look forward to meeting you and your friends at some of them.

The Junior Warden: Christopher Day

My Livery journey started in 2004, some 20 years ago now. But in a way it started back in 1995 when an article in the now defunct Farming News made a last call for applicants for the 46th Management Course at Wye. The article suggested the ideal age to participate was 33 to 40. Being in my 39th year at the time, action was required.

Before venturing into the world of agriculture, I studied business at the Management Centre at the University of Bradford. I then joined Coopers & Lybrand in Leeds and qualified as a chartered accountant in 1982, before accepting a position at the Milan office of Price Waterhouse.

Upon returning to Lincolnshire to farm in 1984, I was faced with the task of educating myself in all aspects of agriculture. This I did by attending some very specialist short courses at Silsoe, Reading University and RASE.



The service in stunning St Bartholemew the Great

After hearing about the Livery Management course, I made enquiries and was instructed to gain five years of experience before applying - in fact I left it 10 years! 'Game-changing' and 'a network for life' is how people describe our courses, and I couldn't agree more.

In 2003, Michael Anyan asked if I would assist in organising a dinner in February 2004 for Lincolnshire Master, Philip Gibbons.

Philip kindly invited both Michael and me to a Livery lunch and we were subsequently asked to join the Company.

First serving on the finance committee, I then moved to the fellowship committee and had responsibility for the Company's



Christopher Day (R) with Richard Crane and the new Senior Warden, Jeremy Finnis (L)

account on X (then Twitter), in addition to acting as Steward, later joining Court. I have been a committee member of the Alumni Association since its inception in 2018, and its Chairman since 2020.

During that time it has grown to over 300 members. The Learning Extension Day is our flagship event, together with a couple of estate visits each year.

Over the past few years, it has been my privilege to meet delegates from our CRL and ACABM programmes and witness the immense influence these courses have in shaping the careers of these very talented people.

With a particular interest in the history of London, I was also pleased to assist the Livery in lockdown 2020 by curating a number of virtual walks delivered by Blue Badge guide, Simon Whitehouse.



The new Master raising a toast

In terms of family, my wife Judy and I have three daughters: Alexandra, a dentist, Georgia, a marketing consultant and India, a partner in our farming business. Our farming business involves a broad range of arable cropping with diversifications in wind, solar, property and fishing.



A fantastic meal was enjoyed by all

Outside of farming, my sporting interests are tennis, shooting and skiing - for a number of years I have skied in our Livery ski team. I also enjoy running; I start each morning with a 5km run around my fishing lakes followed by a fiendish sudoku from The Times: Hopefully keeping me physically fit and mentally alert. I look forward to serving the Master, Senior Warden and the Company in this coming year.

Leading your farm to success

Leadership is an area within agriculture which often lacks attention. Despite being natural leaders and innovators, due to the nature of their work many farmers don't fully understand the value that good leadership can have on their business.

External pressures continue to mount on rural businesses, and farms are becoming increasingly reliant on a web of other people to create a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector.

My Nuffield report explores what forms leadership can take in farming businesses around the world and examines case studies where farmers have influenced a wide group of stakeholders towards a common aim.

Definitions of leadership were created by speaking to senior members of the UK armed forces. The military places people at the centre of leadership, with a high regard for meeting the needs of soldiers and their families. Referencing the importance of the mission, leaders ensure everyone understands how they can contribute towards collective goals.

There are a number of different ways that people can become leaders within the field of agriculture. In the US there is a well-developed network of formal agricultural leadership programmes across the different states. In the Netherlands farmers have responded to advancing environmental legislation



Nuffield Scholar, Chris Manley

and created their own political movement for change. 'Grass-roots' leadership is possible within agriculture, where everyone involved in food production can make a contribution. By working with others and exchanging ideas, small ideas can turn into lasting innovations.

Leaders can work with employees to produce farms which become great places to work, like Grupo Morena in Brazil. Looking after all the needs of the people who work for you will result in employees who are committed to, and take pride in, the business they work for. The importance of expressing

leadership within the community was highlighted in Kenya and Rwanda; farms in these countries had a wide range of initiatives to support the local community and they relied on maximising this soft power to achieve success in the face of wider business uncertainty.

Successful leaders take care of themselves and those around them to create a strong team. Farmers must prioritise their own physical and mental health in order to build resilience. And leaders must be role models, having a caring attitude and cultivating a strong support network for themselves and those they work with. Good leadership is characterised by developing self-knowledge, knowing your employees and knowing your community. Profiling of personality traits may be helpful in some of these examples.

Farmers need to create and action a stakeholder risk management plan that identifies key people or organisations that impact their business. Farms must aspire to be a great place to work to significantly improve their reputation, employee retention and recruitment prospects. There is a collective responsibility for everyone in the supply chain to take a lead; whether on a farm, in a food business or an allied organisation, in order to work together in a mutually beneficial way.

Celebrating outstanding food and farming achievements

On 15 October, the House of Lords opened its historic doors to celebrate the outstanding achievements of 28 trailblazers in the UK's food and farming industry. The prestigious event, hosted by Liveryman Rt Hon Lord Taylor of Holbeach, praised the recipients for their significant contributions to the sector in the presence of 100 guests.

Organised by the Council for Awards of the Royal Agricultural Societies, the ceremony was a true celebration of the innovators, mentors and leaders who are shaping the future of British agriculture. These awards highlight individuals who have gone above and

beyond, driving change in sustainable farming, supporting charities and pushing the boundaries of research and technology. From advancing traditional farming practices to taking on voluntary roles which strengthen the sector, these honourees are transforming the industry for the better.

Liveryman Andrew Blenkiron, said: "These 28 exceptional individuals represent the very best of British farming. Through their leadership and dedication, they have become ambassadors for our industry, exemplifying excellence in important areas and communicating farming's message with the public."



The CARAS Award winners and guests

Students pick up WCF Award

Four agricultural students have been recognised for producing the best dissertation of their year, each receiving the WCF Award and a cash prize.

At the Royal Agricultural University, student Alex Young received the award from Liveryman and Chairman of the education committee, Stephen Watkins.

Not from a farming background, Alex chose to study 'How craft brewers perceive valorisation of brewers' spent grain as livestock feed'. Although brewers' grains have been a staple ruminant animal feed for many years, they have always been regarded as a waste by-product of the brewing industry. Alex's in-depth study looked at the marketing and nutritional value of the product, and possibilities of enhancing it.

On receiving the award, he described the RAU as 'an amazing place to live and



Stephen Watkins with Alex Young

work'. "I am truly grateful to the WCF for recognising my work, it is a fantastic way to end my undergraduate study."

Alex and a university friend are hoping to set up a micro-brewery near a dairy farm in the hope it will use the spent grain from the brewing process.

At Harper Adams University, Past Master Karen Mercer presented two awards, to joint winners Lucy Fowler and Imogen Old, who both obtained the highest marks in the Honours Research Project.

Lucy is from a family farm in Gloucestershire, and her dissertation was based on the integration of biological fungicides into winter wheat crop protection programmes. This was based on trials she managed during her placement in Ireland, and had some very interesting data sets to compare when producing her results.

Lucy is now with the Hutchinson Foundation programme as a trainee arable agronomist based in Ledbury.

Imogen is from a family dairy farm in Devon. Her dissertation was titled 'An investigation into dairy farmers' control methods for Johne's disease and their motivation to reduce the prevalence of the disease'. Her research involved developing a questionnaire to assess dairy farm managers and workers' motivation for reducing Johne's on their farm and to gain an understanding of barriers and motivators to control it.

Imogen will soon be leaving on a dairy study tour with LIC to New Zealand. After her travels she will be returning to the family farm.

At Askham Bryan College, Carl Austin topped his year, and received his award from Liveryman Tony Pexton.



Tony Pexton presenting to Carl Austin



L-R: Lucy Fowler, Karen Mercer and Imogen Old

Cementing connections with the Armed Forces Covenant

The WCF is the latest Livery Company of the City of London to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

On 16 September ahead of the annual Masters & Clerks' Luncheon, the Master Guy Brogden signed the Covenant alongside Group Captain 'Dutch' Holland OBE, Station Commander at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire.

The Covenant is a commitment from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives as a result of their military service.



Group Captain Holland and the Master

The subsequent sell-out lunch brought together nearly 50 Masters, Prime Wardens and Clerks from other London Liveries. It is a great chance to promote our industry and learn about other City Liveries.

The guest speaker was Hertfordshire tenant farmer Jo Franklin, who has benefited from WCF sponsorship through a Nuffield Scholarship, Leadership Course and now an MBA. She spoke passionately about the pressures facing farmers and the divide between landowners and farmers caused by some government policy.

Livery Familiarisation Day

On 17 June the WCF opened its doors to an interested and eager bunch of potential and established Liverymen.

Meeting at the Farmers' and Fletcher's Livery Hall on Cloth Street, attendees heard from Julia Sibley MBE, who is part of the Livery Committee and Past Master Innholder.

She explained the history of the City of London Liveries: "Livery companies probably had their origins in this country around 1066," she said. "People with the same trade or craft tended to live or work near each other and they began to make informal arrangements amongst themselves for regulating competition in their trade and keeping professional standards."

History of the Livery Companies

The earliest recorded Livery was the Weavers' in 1155, by which time it is believed that many Liveries or guilds were already organised and active in support of their trade or craft. The members paid to belong and the word 'guild' originates from the Saxon word 'geldan', meaning 'to pay'.

The guilds were designed to protect members of their trade by controlling the provision of services, and manufacturing and selling of goods in the City of London. They also prevented unlimited competition and helped to keep wages and working conditions consistent in what were unstable times.

The Master, Guy Brogden, explained that, given how old the farming profession is, it's perhaps surprising it wasn't awarded Livery status until recently. However, as there were simply



The Livery Familiarisation Day is open to both existing and prospective Liverymen, explaining more about the movement

no farms inside the City of London it is perhaps not so surprising. There was no representation and no need for apprenticeships, so the farming community didn't have a voice.

That all changed in WW2. The population went from being 60% self-sufficient in food, to 85-90%. Through that effort, farmers were able to advance their endeavours, get a Livery company set up, and were finally granted Livery status in 1952, making it the 80th Livery company.

What does the Farmers' Livery do?

It offers a common meeting ground for everyone in the agricultural community, bringing people together and sharing ideas. "From the beginning, our core purpose has been to advance education in our sector," said Guy.

An alliance was formed with Wye College in the 1950s; Wye College was then part of Imperial College London and one of the foremost agricultural education establishments at the time.

"We started with lectures and in the 1960s we went a step further and introduced courses," he added.

The Advanced Course in Agricultural Business Management (ACABM) still runs today, now at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester. "It's coming into its 72nd year and is our flagship course in business management. It's aimed at people who have been in work for 10 to 15 years and want to advance their understanding of running a business." In 1996, the WCF started another course,

the Challenge of Rural Leadership, which is aimed at a slightly younger cohort; originally at Seale Hayne, the course is now run in partnership with Duchy College.

Charity work

The Farmers' Livery also does a great deal for charity, giving away £180,000 a year to charitable causes. "Around 60% of that goes to our causes like the Surrey Docks Farm, and 40% goes in grants to individuals," said Guy. "Combined, the Liveries give away around £75m a year."

In addition, members organise a busy calendar of both formal and informal meetings. Formal gatherings take the form of lunches, banquets and summer outings, while informal meetings like farm visits are run jointly with the Alumni Association.

"Everything we do is with education on the one hand, and fellowship on the other."

After hearing from Deputy Master Elect Rosie Carne on the governance of the Company, and the role of the Beadle by Ted Prior, attention turned to the buffet lunch and the Loving Cup.

Finishing up the day was a walking tour led by Murray Craig, a City of London tour guide, who was full of interesting facts about the history of different Liveries and their halls.

The Familiarisation Day is an annual event and welcomes both potential and established Liverymen. For more information, keep an eye on the What's On page on the website.



HOLTS charitable and legacy lots

HOLTS Auctioneers, the country's leading auctioneers of fine modern and antique guns, and keen supporters of the WCF, have an initiative to help us support the Surrey Docks Farm.

HOLTS can assist you when the time comes to retire your guns, or perhaps if you're just looking to make some more room in the cabinet and would like Surrey Docks Farm to benefit from the proceeds.

Through their charitable and legacy lots programme the HOLTS team of highly experienced staff will handle the collection and sale of your guns and related items without charging any seller's fees, and are also happy to advise on leaving the value of a gun in your Will.

Charity lots

Regular valuation days are held throughout the UK, where you can bring items to be valued and consigned. These



Guns can be auctioned for charity or left as a legacy

are hosted by experienced members of the HOLTS team who will tell you something about the item you have brought along. They are always keen to hear of family or related provenance; it is often of interest and can have a highly beneficial impact on the value.

They will then suggest a realistic catalogue estimate and reserve (if you are minded to sell), together with a likely hammer price.

Legacy lots

As a supporter of the WCF charity initiatives, HOLTS will advise you on how to bequeath the value of your guns to the Trust and will advise on the procedure that executors should follow when the time comes, including licencing and, if necessary, working with the police.

HOLTS will pay the sale proceeds directly to the Trust, on your behalf.

For more information, please visit www.holtsauctioneers.com/legacy.asp, or contact David Thurgood on 01297 306123 or by email at westcountry@holtsauctioneers.com.



Always in your thoughts - WCF legacies

Making a will is one of the most important things you can do to help your family, although once you have done so it is important to keep it up to date as your family situation changes.

If you have not reviewed your will for some time and it needs updating, please consider leaving a legacy to the Farmers Company to help it continue with its education courses and charity work.

As Liverymen we all benefit in so many different ways from being a member of this wonderful Company, and giving a legacy is an excellent way of saying thank you. There is another way you can help, and that is by giving one of



Liveryman Hugh Wykes

our legacy leaflets to your solicitor. It is surprising how many people cannot decide who to leave their money to and often ask their solicitor for advice. If your solicitor knows about our educational and charity work they might, if they feel it appropriate, suggest others consider us as a beneficiary.

There are legacy leaflets available at our functions and I am happy to post one to you, if you so wish, so please just ask. If you would like more information about legacies, please contact me or speak to me at one of our events.

Hugh Wykes: 07831 186471 or hugh@wykeslodge.co.uk

Reminder: The Inter-Livery Carol Service



The annual the Inter-Livery Carol Service at St Bartholomew the Great will take place on Tuesday 17 December at 18:00.

Do join us at this popular event, the music of which is based on the inspiration of the renowned carol service from Kings College, Cambridge.

It will be followed by a three-course traditional dinner with wines at Butchers' Hall.

We have an allocation of only 24 places and it is planned that we will be joined by members of the Butchers', Hackney Carriage Drivers', Fletchers', Tax Advisers', Communicators', Founders' and Actuaries' Liveries, all of whom also have an association with the church. If you would like to attend, please contact our Clerk Graham Bamford or visit the members portal to book a place.

Announcements

The following were admitted as Freeman at the meetings of the Court held on 3 June and 8 October 2024:

Deborah Jane Hewitt
(nee Winstanley)

Proposed by Jeremy Finnis DL
Seconded by William Gemmill

Philip David Whitcomb

Proposed by Karen Mercer
Seconded by Timothy Russ

The following Freeman were Clothed with the Livery at the Common Hall on 4 June and 8 October 2024:

Jane Ann Gurney MBE
Richard James Smith Means
Sophie Louise Dwerryhouse
Alan John Plumb
Victoria Rosemary Keith
Charles Andrew Wraith

Deaths: It is with sadness and regret that we announce the deaths of the following:

George Malcolm Newbury of Lupin Cottage, Plumstead Green, Norfolk, who died on 28 September 2024. He was Clothed on 9 March 1981.

Keith Heap Gilbert (Yeoman) of Holly Farm Park Tattershall Bridge, Lincoln, who died in July 2024. He was Clothed in 1978.

Events

Events for your diaries in 2024 - 2025

- 6 November – The Cambridgeshire Dinner, Cambridge
- 9 November - Lord Mayor's Show
- 10-22 November - 73rd Advanced Course in Agricultural Business Management, RAU
- 12-13 November - Visit to Dyson Farming & RAF Waddington; dinner at Hemswell Court
- 19-21 November - Nuffield Conference, Belfast
- 26-27 November - WCFA Learning Extension Days, Loughborough University
- 3 December - December Court & Livery Luncheon, Ironmongers' Hall
- 17 December - Carol Service, St Bartholomew's; Christmas Dinner, Butchers' Hall
- 8-10 January 2025 - Oxford Farming Conference, Oxford
- 19-31 January - 28th Challenge of Rural Leadership course, Dartington Hall, Totnes
- 22-24 January - Inter-Livery Skiing
- 4 February - Annual Banquet, Drapers' Hall
- 4 March - Inter-Livery Pancake Races, Guildhall Yard
- 5 March - March Court & Livery Luncheon, Farmers & Fletchers' Hall
- 11 March - City Food & Drink Lecture, Guildhall
- 28 March - United Guilds Service, St Paul's Cathedral
- 1 April - April Fool's Day Bin End Dinner
- 29 April - Agricultural Lecture & Dinner, Plaisterers' Hall

To view events on the Farmers' Livery website, please scan this QR code:

