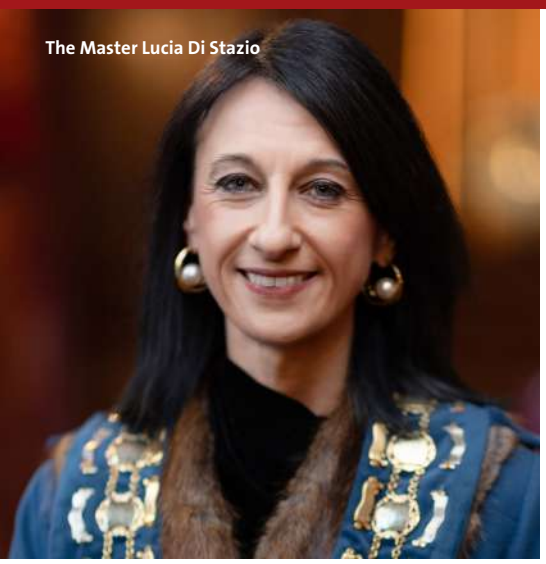
The Builders' Merchant

Worshipful Company of Builders' Merchants

Newsletter of Worshipful Company of Builders' Merchants

SUMMER 2026 - ISSUE 41



The Master Lucia Di Stazio

Opportunity and Fellowship

Serving as Master of this great Livery Company has been one of the greatest privileges of my life and an honour I will cherish forever. This newsletter reflects the charitable efforts of our Livery Company, the many positive developments over the last 12 months and the people who have made this year so special.

A real privilege has been sharing my year with The Rt Hon. Lady Mayor of London, Dame Susan Langley DBE, and her Consort Gary, supporting Sue's vision to 'Un-Square the Square Mile'.

Sue is an inspirational female lead in the City and in representing our City internationally. One of Sue's core focuses has been to encourage young people to pursue their ambitions and see the City as a place where they can achieve them. Her drive and focuses resonate with me and our industry: opening doors and making a difference where it's needed the most.

Education and Opportunity, which I mentioned at my Installation last year, remain very important to me and those who know me, will know my passion for our sector – its people, our resilience, the relationships and among all the 'open doors' of opportunity it brings.

Our Company's bursaries and focus on education and training are helping create opportunities for the next generation, such as Craig Forbes of GPH Builders Merchants, with more on this published soon.

The Lady Mayor and her Consort have also been extremely active in bringing Livery Companies together to strengthen connections and work together towards common goals. Our Company is part of the Construction Liveries Group, which represents 24 Liveries of the construction industry including Plumbers, Chartered Architects, Constructors, Chartered Surveyors, Tylers and Bricklayers, Paviors and Plaisterers. But during our year we have also been fortunate to get to know Companies beyond our traditional construction sector circles, such as the International Bankers, Upholders, Farriers, Mercers, Fuellers, Air Pilots, Nurses and many others.

There have been many 'pinch yourself' moments of 'am I actually here', in the private quarters of Mansion House, at Master Architect's City wedding or at an occasion where I find myself talking to people with different backgrounds to mine, and then at the same time, a true sense of pride that I was there, representing the Worshipful Company of Builders' Merchants as your Master and this fantastic industry. Every Installation, luncheon, dinner and City event was an opportunity to highlight our Livery and the building materials sector.

Other special moments during my year included visiting the Old Bailey, learning more about its work in crime-prevention and the opportunity to observe a live murder trial. I returned to the Old Bailey in September for the launch of IndEX – the Industry and Educators Exchange – a new initiative that brings business leaders, educators and government together to prepare young people for the world of work, and to make collaboration between education and industry easier.

Seeing off over 120 London cabs as they depart for the annual Children's Magical Taxi Tour to Disneyland Paris was emotional. An annual event our Livery sponsors that gives children with life-limiting illnesses the trip of a lifetime. Equally memorable was the launch of the Mark Long Trust that opens the skies to everyone, making aviation a reality regardless of ability or social background. These moments reinforce the role of Livery Companies and their unwavering charitable efforts.

Welcoming many new Freemen and Liverymen throughout my year has been a real pleasure too, many of which are reported in this newsletter, and seeing members embrace the honour and opportunity gives me great confidence for our Company's future.

This year we have also celebrated three weddings, two within our own Livery. Congratulations to Liverymen Christine Welch and Lucyanne Brasier. The third was Master Architect's wedding, with a ceremonial escort through the City in full regalia. All incredibly special occasions.

Beyond our work in the City and with other Livery Companies, our own Company events have been strongly supported too,

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reflecting our Livery and industry's closeness and strength.

From my Installation at the magnificent Merchant Taylors' Hall, where over 250 members and guests joined us to celebrate the start of my year, through to our Christmas Dinner last December at Trinity House, which sold out in days. The City & Awards lunch achieved a full house at Apothecaries' Hall – a strong favourite of mine, celebrating the many achievements of young people in our industry and organisations our Livery supports.

My Master's weekend in May drew on my Italian Heritage. Three days in Southern Italy with over 80 people was truly special as I aimed for people to experience the Italy I know and love and enjoy the traditions I grew up with.

We were able to bring a taste of Italy back to London for our 'Festa D'Estate' Summer Social at the private RAF Club in July. An evening of fun and celebration, and an honour to welcome the Lady Mayor, who joined us on her birthday, accompanied by her Consort, Gary, and Sheriff Keith Bottomley with his Consort Kevin.

During my year, I hope to have strengthened our Livery's presence and connections in the City and across our industry and continued the great work of the many Masters before me, and I end with a few notes of thanks.

Firstly, to my Consort, Liveryman Mike Tattam (Mistress Mike). We have been a strong duo and Mike's unwavering calmness, humour, encouragement and support have been pivotal. Whether representing our Company as Consort or accompanying me on visits, Mike has been exceptional.

Thank you also to my Sponsors for their very generous support. The work we do as a Company would simply not be possible without the support of our Sponsors. A huge thank you too to my Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Keeper of the Roll, Past Masters and Court Assistants for all your advice and friendships; to our Committee Chairs and Committee members who give up their time to help our Company stay ahead and navigate important issues, and to all our Freemen and Liverymen for the extraordinary warmth you have shown throughout my year.

I now hand this special and privileged role to the very safe hands of our new Master Kevin Fenlon. Kevin and his Consort Jane will lead our Livery with distinction, and I look forward to supporting them as they start their own memorable journey.

Lucia Di Stazio
Master



The Court 2025/26

Master
Lucia Di Stazio

Senior Warden
Kevin Fenlon

Junior Warden
Steve Durdant-Hollamby

Keeper of the Roll
Julian Milligan

Immediate Past Master
Steve Boyer

The Learned **Clerk**
Jane, Lady Hilliard

Bursar & Assistant Clerk
Julie Langford

Deputy Clerk
Donna Lodge

Almoner
John Poore, BEM

Court Assistants
Rav Singh Sumal
Paul Bence
Jon Crean

For your diary

It's been a busy year for our Company! This Newsletter is packed with lots of activity and events our members and guests have experienced throughout 2026. For the remainder of this year we have our popular Christmas Carol Service and Dinner.

Friday 11th December 2026: Carol Service at St Peter ad Vincula followed by Christmas Dinner at Trinity House

A favourite event on the Calendar, the Company gathers at the Tower of London for a Carol Service, before an entertaining Christmas Dinner at Trinity House.



Thank you to our Sponsors

We are very grateful to those who have sponsored the current Master's year. If you are interested in sponsoring a Master's year please contact The Clerk at info@wcobm.co.uk

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Member News

WCoBM membership continues to grow

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed more new Liverymen and Freemen, with our membership numbers now standing at 269. Welcome to all our new members. We look forward to seeing you at a WCoBM event very soon.



Master Lucia Di Stazio in April with newly admitted Freemen (L-R): Simon Taylor of Ibstock, Jonathan Day of Day Aggregates, Martin Keay of AW Lumb & Co, Kevin Williams of NMBS, Carlywn Coombes of Bence & Co, Philip Walford of Covers Timber and Builders' Merchants, and Ian Murphy of IBC Buying Group.



Junior Warden Steve Durdant-Hollamby with the newly admitted Freemen in July (L-R): Andrew Griffiths of Boys & Boden, Andrew McLellan of JW Grant, David Pattison of Robert Price Builders' Merchants, and Owen Thorogood of PPW.



Kevin Moran receives his Freedom of the City.

Our new Freemen:

- Andrew Griffiths of Boys & Boden
- Andrew McLellan of JW Grant
- David Pattison of Robert Price Builders' Merchants
- Owen Thorogood of PPW
- Carlywn Coombes of Bence & Co
- Jonathan Day of Day Aggregates
- Martin Keay of AW Lumb & Co
- Ian Murphy of IBC Buying Group
- Simon Taylor of Ibstock
- Philip Walford of Covers Timber and Builders' Merchants
- Kevin Williams of NMBS.

Our new Liverymen:

- Kevin Moran of MP Moran
- James Pilbin of Keyline Civils
- Simon Fleet of W.Howard
- Benjamin Giddings
- Louise Williams of Beggs and Partners
- Josephine Crowe of BSS.



Six new Liverymen were installed at our Election Court General in April. Pictured above with the Master, (clockwise from bottom left): Josephine Crowe of BSS, Kevin Moran of MP Moran, James Pilbin of Keyline Civils, Simon Fleet of W.Howard, Benjamin Giddings and Louise Williams of Beggs and Partners.

Obituaries

It is with deepest sadness that we announce the passing of former Freeman John Fairhurst and of Liveryman Michael Ridgeon.

John became a Freeman of the Company in 2012 before resigning in July 2022, and Michael was admitted as a Freeman in January 2000 and installed as a Liveryman in May 2000.

Our deepest condolences to their family and friends.

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Member News continued...



Wedding Bells have been in the air this summer for WCoBM Liverymen!

The Master and Consort together with other members of our Livery attended Liveryman Lucyanne Matthews' wedding to Marcus Brasier on 11th July in Sussex (left).

And, below, the Master and Consort were invited to the wedding of Liveryman Christine Jones on 14th June in Liverpool. Christine and her new husband Paul Welch were married at St John the Evangelist in Walton-on-the-Hill, followed by a reception at the magnificent Liverpool Town Hall. Many congratulations to you all!







Martin Armour received his City Freedom in July.



L-R: Neil Woods and Mark Hall have also received their City Freedoms this year.

Member obligations

The Livery Company is a charitable organisation, with funds to support our industry, our affiliates and the Mayoralty. Donations from our members are therefore very important so that we can continue to support individuals and organisations in their time of need. Below is a short reminder of the obligations for Liverymen and Freemen that join our Company:

- All Freemen when joining the Company pay a Fine (Entrance Fee).
- All Freemen and Liverymen also pay an annual Quarterage (Subscription) in April via our GoCardless system.
- All Fines and Quarterages are agreed annually by the Court.
- On entry to the Company, all Freemen are asked to make a donation to our Charities Fund by personal Standing Order – the amount varies depending on personal circumstances, with a suggested donation of a minimum of £250. Gift Aid is extremely important to our efforts in raising funds so we encourage personal donations rather than company ones as the Gift Aid is ONLY claimable against personal donations.

Please remember to advise the Clerk of any change of address. This is very important for when we make a claim to HMRC for Gift Aid repayments. Your address needs to be submitted and our Almoner is legally responsible for that data. If you have recently moved but not informed the Clerk, please do so as soon as possible. Email info@wcobm.co.uk.

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Training and Education

Grants to help merchants progress their careers

In April, WCoBM attended the NMBS Exhibition at Coventry's CBS Arena to promote the dedicated grants available from its Training & Education Fund. The NMBS Exhibition brings together independent merchants and suppliers from across the industry.

WCoBM used its presence at the event to raise awareness of the grants, and to distribute its brand new 'Build Your Career' leaflet, which gives more information about the grants available, what they can be used for, and the significant benefits that a career in the building materials industry can provide.

Grants of up to £2,000 per person are available to individuals and companies within the building materials sector, as well as individuals looking to enter the sector for the first time. Once approved, the grants can be used to partially or fully support:

- The purchase of relevant materials that enable learning, eg, computer equipment or practical tools
- Dedicated qualifications, modules, training platforms or courses that contribute to further learning or development within the building materials sector
- Apprenticeship programmes
- Dedicated work experience within the industry to support role development

Special thanks to Liverymen Simon Bicknell and Jennie Ward for their time, and to everyone who helped make WCoBM's presence at this event a success.



The Company recently provided a £2,000 bursary to support a young student train in site carpentry after finding their interest through their involvement with Build Up. The bursary contributed towards travel costs to college and the course, helping remove some of the financial barriers associated with undertaking their training.

We are delighted that the young individual has completed their course in site carpentry and secured an apprenticeship. Their progress is a great example of what can be achieved when young people are given practical opportunities and the right support to pursue a career within our industry.



Are you interested in getting involved in the City in another way?

The Farringdon Ward Club

The Farringdon Ward Club was founded in 1894 as a civic and social organisation for those who live, work, or have an interest in the City of London wards of Farringdon Within and Farringdon Without. Today, the club focuses its recruitment efforts on residents, businesses and other organisations based in the wards, but also accepts applications from anyone interested in what they offer.

The Club's annual centrepiece is a Civic Lunch to which the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs and Aldermen are invited. A networking evening is also held on the second Tuesday of most months, usually with a speaker who talks on a subject of interest. Other events include a rowing event on the Thames, a carol concert, and lunch after the Lord Mayor's Show. Recently there have been visits to Windsor Castle and the Balfour Winery, and tours of the Wards.

The Club also has a charitable trust that supports the Lord Mayor's charities. The current President is working with the Corporation and a social enterprise to provide a development programme for NEETs from the City of London. If you are interested in joining, or for more information, visit www.farringdonwardclub.org.

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Offering inspiration through aviation

WCoBM is affiliated with the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF). After the tragic loss of Squadron Leader Mark Long in 2024, the BBMF established the Mark Long Trust to continue his legacy. Here, BBMF Sqn Ldr Mark 'Suggs' Sugden explains more.

Most of you, I am sure, will be aware of the tragic events of May 2024, and the fateful accident that resulted in the loss of a Spitfire and its pilot Sqn Ldr Mark Long. To ensure the legacy of one of the RAF's finest lives on, a Trust was set up in his name in August of last year, seeking to provide opportunities within aviation for those who are disadvantaged in our society.

The Trust speaks very much to the person that Mark Long was – kind, humble, and someone who would always put others before himself, firm in the belief that everyone deserves the best opportunity in life. The Trust, whose motto is 'Horizons without limits', aims to inspire and challenge the barriers for those less fortunate than ourselves, whether through disability, financial hardship or social background.

The Trust was set up by myself and Mark Long's widow Sqn Ldr Beth Long, and now comprises four Trustees and a dedicated committee who all share an incredible passion for the legacy they cherish and the opportunities that the Trust can provide.

While still in its relative infancy, the Mark Long Trust has already surpassed all expectations. The launch event held in January 2026 ignited a genuine sense of passion for the work that the Trust does and the lives which it is destined to change. We were also delighted to welcome the WCoBM's Master, Lucia Di Stazio, Consort Mike Tattam and a number of Liverymen to join us at this pivotal event in the Trust's journey.

Since its launch, the Mark Long Trust has expanded its reach to help hundreds of people throughout the UK. Partnerships with Fly2Help, based out of Gloucester Airport, have enabled us to fund 20 outreach programmes to schools in deprived areas, in addition to three Aim High schemes that provide week-long experiences to disadvantaged youngsters, allowing them the opportunity to experience the wonderful and varied world of aviation first hand.

The Mark Long Trust has also provided scholarships through Flying Scholarships for Disabled People (FSDP). This intensive scholarship includes a three-week residential flying course and is awarded to those who are selected through a rigorous selection process held at RAF Cranwell.

The Mark Long Trust was delighted to provide two such placements this year, which are genuinely life changing and awarded to those who need it most. The FSDP scholarships aim to build confidence, independence and prove that disability does not limit someone's potential, and the life-changing impact they have on participants is truly remarkable.

The Mark Long Trust's latest partnership was with Aerobility – a well-established charitable organisation that delivers various schemes for those with disabilities.

The Trust also financially supported a FlyIn event at Doncaster Airport in May where, over four days, they flew 50 people with a range of disabilities. In addition, we are also funding Junior aviator clubs and simulator programmes through Aerobility, opening the world of aviation to youngsters with a range of disabilities.

2026 has been a truly astonishing year for the Mark Long Trust, but we cannot do this valuable work without those who so generously provide financial support and fundraise for such a wonderful cause. The WCoBM has forged very close ties with the BBMF and now proudly stands alongside the Mark Long Trust. Learn more at **marklongtrust.org**.



Late BBMF Squadron Leader Mark Long.



The Mark Long Trust works with Flying Scholarships for Disabled People (FSDP) to offer a three-week residential flying course.

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Supporting young people

Each year WCoBM provides charitable support to organisations that make a positive difference to young people and communities, particularly where there is a strong connection with the building materials sectors.

One of the charities we are proud to support is Build Up, which works with young people aged 10 to 25 to design and build public and community spaces. Build Up brings young people together with builders and designers, giving them the opportunity to learn practical design and construction skills, develop their leadership abilities and experience the satisfaction of seeing something they have helped design become a permanent part of their local area.

During the past year, WCoBM has provided almost £10,000 worth of tools, materials and training to support Build Up and its projects.

The difference Build Up makes

Across 10 projects during the year, Build Up worked with 391 young people and provided 11 paid work placements. The impact of Build Up's work extends far beyond the physical spaces created. Some 93% of participants developed construction skills, 84% developed their leadership skills and 87% developed their interpersonal skills. Almost three quarters (72%) said they felt more able to support their community in the future.

The experience also creates new relationships within communities, with 87% of young people making new local connections through their involvement. All those surveyed felt the completed spaces were more welcoming and inclusive.

As 14-year-old Sophie explained after taking part: "I learnt how to drill pieces of wood, how to build things and use different types of equipment. I feel more confident speaking to other people. And I learned how to work through things when problems come up."



At Fords Park Road, the future site of a community centre, Build Up worked alongside local organisations PEACH and E16 CLT to begin transforming a garden that had been derelict and overgrown for decades. Local volunteers helped clear the site, before 13 young people designed and built the first phase of the new community garden. Build Up has since coordinated the relocation of an entire Chelsea Flower Show garden to the site.

At Hackney Marshes Adventure Playground, 75 young people worked with Build Up during spring and summer 2025 to create a new play structure. This includes a high platform, a jump-off point and a challenging climbing route that will be used by more than 850 children and young people from low-income households each year.

The long-term value of projects such as these can be seen through people such as Rashann, who took part in one of Build Up's projects as a teenager in 2016 and now works at Hackney Marshes.

He said: "We were doing things that we would have never done if it wasn't for this project. I say to the kids now, it's a wonderful experience. You guys are going to be able to come back here in 10 years and look at it and be like, that piece of the playground, that was made with our hands."



Looking ahead

Build Up has continues to expand during 2026. Its Open Call programme allows young people to choose which community projects the charity funds. This year, the programme was expanded to organisations across the UK, attracting 32 nominations involving 360 young people. Build Up is now working to select its first project outside London.

Other projects include Grove Park Youth Club, where Build Up will work with local young people this autumn to improve the club's outdoor areas. Grove Park is particularly significant because the youth club itself was saved by the local community after proposals were made to convert the building into flats.

For WCoBM, supporting Build Up reflects our commitment to charitable giving, education and the future of the building materials and construction sectors. The charity gives young people the chance to work with materials, tools and construction techniques, often for the first time, while their work leaves something tangible behind for the wider community.

We are proud to continue supporting Build Up and to see the impact that our funding, alongside practical support from members of the Company, is helping to achieve.

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Fighting back against knife crime

The Worshipful Company of Builders' Merchants is proud to help support an organisation working hard to reduce knife crime across the country.

WCoBM is continuing its support for Knife Crime Matters (KCM) through its Charitable Fund, helping KCM to deliver initiatives aimed at preventing knife crime. The Company's latest donation has helped fund the preparation of new educational materials, alongside the purchase of emergency bleed kits and handheld metal detectors for schools.

The handheld detectors give schools a practical tool that can be used where there are concerns that a pupil may be carrying a weapon. Meanwhile, emergency bleed kits give immediate access to equipment that helps control severe bleeding while emergency services are on their way, with KCM making these kits available to schools around the country.

The location of each kit is added to a public register, operating in a similar way to those used to locate defibrillators. This means the equipment is not solely there for the school, but can be identified and accessed by members of the wider community in an emergency. Alongside these practical measures, education and awareness remains at the centre of KCM's work.

WCoBM funding has contributed towards the development of the KCM Education Workbook Series, a complete knife crime prevention programme for school years 7-11 in the UK. It includes a 50-minute lesson plan designed to give schools a structured and age-appropriate way to talk to students about knife crime clearly, calmly and with confidence. The resources are due to start being distributed to schools from September, with materials provided to safeguarding teams so they can be incorporated into lessons and wider school activities.







Andrew Brown of Knife Crime Matters (pictured above) said: "If I [could], I'd make sure every school in the country got all these resources for nothing, because I feel passionately about it."

The charity's aim is to reach as many young people as possible with a simple message: the best way to prevent the devastating consequences of knife crime is to not carry a weapon in the first place.

Supporting KCM's work is anti-knife crime campaigner Caroline Willgoose, whose 15-year-old son Harvey was fatally stabbed by a fellow pupil inside All Saints Catholic High School in Sheffield in February 2025. Since Harvey's death, Caroline has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of knife crime, speaking directly to young people and advising government on the issue. A key part of her work aims to encourage schools to talk openly about knife possession and respond to warning signs quickly.

Caroline said: "We need to educate children from a young age."

Caroline's experience has made her a determined advocate for giving young people safe ways to report concerns and making sure those concerns are acted upon. Her work with KCM brings the reality of knife crime directly into its education programme.

When talking to young people, Caroline focuses not only on Harvey and the devastating impact his death has had on his family and friends, but on the consequences for everyone involved when a young person makes the decision to carry and use a knife.

WCoBM has supported Knife Crime Matters for several years. By combining education with potentially life-saving equipment, the partnership is focused on reaching young people early, helping schools address knife crime openly and giving communities practical tools that can make a difference when they are needed most.



Raising awareness of knife crime

Independent builders' merchant Lawsons has provided space to display a banner promoting Knife Crime Matters and acknowledging WCoBM's sponsorship of the organisation. Do you have a space at your branch, site or offices where a similar banner, or even a mural promoting KCM's important work could be displayed? If so, please reach out to our Almoner, John Poore to find out more.

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City & Awards Luncheon

Recognising young talent & industry achievements

On 16th March, 2026, our Company hosted its annual City & Awards lunch at Apothecaries' Hall in London. The popular event celebrates the achievements of those in the builders' merchant industry, as well as rewarding service and dedication among the affiliations and charitable organisations that WCoBM supports.



The Master and Guest speaker Dr Lois Rowe (centred) with award winners from affiliated organisations.

Liverymen, Freemen, award winners and guests gathered to celebrate success and encourage the next generation of building materials' industry leaders. The event also invites 'rising stars' from our industry to attend, meet senior industry figures and learn about the history and values of City Livery Companies.





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Past Master Dame Fiona Woolf, DBE, DL received a special mention and gift for her longstanding support and contribution to the Beckenham & Penge Sea Cadets. The gift was presented by former Chairman Ray Blackmore (R).





Liverymen Andy Gamble (L) and Fiona Russell-Horne with Freeman Carlywn Coombes (Centre).



The Guest of Honour was Dr Lois Rowe FCGI, Principal of the City & Guilds of London Art School. She has had a distingushed career in higher education and is an active artist and researcher.
Dr Rowe said:

"I've been so moved hearing about the activities of the builders' merchants and the people we are celebrating today. Continuing to support and encourage the learning and development of individuals across our cities, the building materials industry and the important affiliations that this Livery supports ensures that we continue to build a skilled, dynamic and forward-thinking community."

Our Master said:

"Our City & Awards Luncheon is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate young individuals who are making a difference in their field and also acknowledge those leading the way in representing the dynamic and diverse opportunities available in the building materials sector.

Education is an area that I am incredibly passionate about. In whatever form it takes, be it professional qualifications, apprenticeships, practical training, mentoring or work experience, it creates opportunities and helps individuals reach their ambitions."



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Award winners

This year's event recognised students from the Builders' Merchants Federation, the City & Guilds of London Art School; individuals from affiliated organisations, namely HMS Forth, the 3rd Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR), Beckenham and Penge Sea Cadets, and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF).

The day also celebrates young achievers working with Build Up Foundation, a charity that runs practical construction projects where young people can design and build structures in their local communities, with awards given for examples of strong leadership. The No Going Back Rising Star Award highlights the work of the No Going Back charity, which aims to rehabilitate ex-offenders and help them to secure employment.







BMF student winners:

L-R: The Best Online Student award was presented to Tia Kowalik, Sales Person at MKM Building Supplies. The Best Performing Institute of Builders' Merchants Diploma Student was named as Euan Blair, Trainee Manager at Beatson's Building Supplies. Meanwhile, the Best Performing Apprentice of the Year was Jack Evans, Assistant Category Manager – Solar PV & EV Charging at City Plumbing.



No Going Back Rising Star Award:

The award was presented to Michael Chapman, who has transformed his life and qualified as a BICSc assessor. The award was accepted on his behalf by a representative of No Going Back.



3rd Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment:

The Best Recruit prize was awarded to Private Gavin Milligan (above middle), while the Best Soldier prize was presented to Private Liam Scullion, (above right), pictured here with Dr Lois Rowe.

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City & Awards Luncheon continued...





HMS Forth:

Petty Officer Dale Plumpton (above left) was recognised for his Outstanding Service to the Royal Navy. Petty Officer Jake Crossley (above right) received an Award for his All-Round Contribution to Unit Effectiveness.





Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF):

Sgt James Smith (above left) was presented with the BBMF Excellence Award and Sgt David Yates (above right) was named BBMF Aviator of the Year.



Beckenham and Penge Sea Cadets:

Cadet Frankie Ballard-O'Neill received the Award for Outstanding Cadet.



Build Up Foundation:

Aleksa Asme (above left) and Kaylah Jackson (above right) received the Leadership Award for Community Change in recognition of their work to transform a park in Deptford, South-East London, into a safe outdoor space for young people.



The WCoBM Master's Award

Each year the Master also presents an award to someone within the Livery who has significantly contributed to its reputation and who continues to make a difference in our industry. The 2026 Master's Award was presented to Past Master Gary Hopkins, Chair of Turnbull & Co.

The Master said: "Gary is a constant guiding hand for our Livery with his immense knowledge and positive leadership and encouragement, always thinking of others and for the greater benefit of our Company."

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Election Court General

One of our Livery's main events each year is the Election Court General, held in April. All Liverymen and Freemen are expected to attend as it is an important occasion where our new Master and Wardens are elected for the ensuing year.



In April, Senior Warden Kevin Fenlon was elected Master for the ensuring year. He will be supported by Senior Warden-Elect Steve Durdant-Hollamby and Junior Warden-Elect Julian Milligan.

Kevin's Installation Ceremony took place on Friday 23rd October 2026 at Fishmongers' Hall.

This year's Election Court General included the Installation of six new Liverymen (pictured below and on page 3), followed by dinner at Armourers' Hall. Our Principal Guest was Lieutenant Colonel Jon Bowman of the 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (3 PWRR) who spoke about his time and experiences in the military. 3 PWRR is one of WCoBM's valued military affiliations whom we are proud and privileged to support.





Our Principal Guest gave a fascinating speech.





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RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight

In May, our Livery was again honoured with a special visit to the Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) in Coningsby. The BBMF's main mission is to maintain the priceless artefacts of our national heritage in airworthy condition in order to commemorate those who have fallen in the service of our country. It also serves to promote the modern day Air Force and inspire future generations.







During our visit, we were fortunate to enjoy a flight demonstration of the Hurricane PZ865 (Mk IIC) – the last Hurricane built.

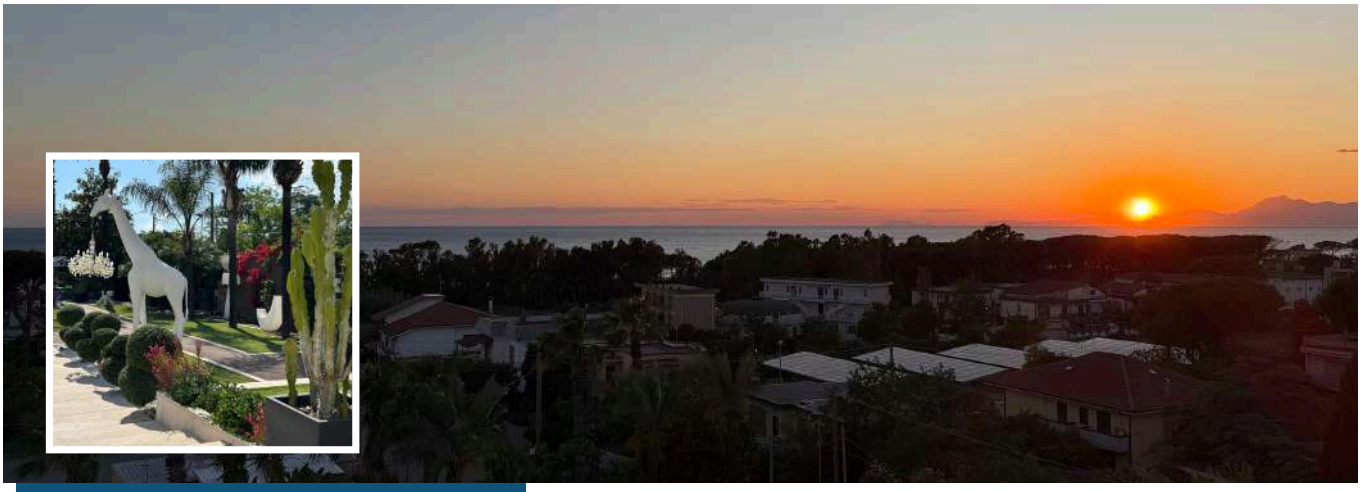




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Master's Weekend

Drawing on her Italian heritage, the Master and Consort led almost almost 90 Liverymen, Freemen and guests in May to Paestum in Southern Italy, for four days of culture, history and connection.



The hotel had panoramic sea views and some unusual statues!

Did You Know?

Paestum in Southern Italy is home to three of the world's best preserved ancient Greek temples in the Doric style. Constructed around 550BCE, they rival those found in Greece itself.

The weekend started on Thursday evening with a welcome dinner at the Mec Paestum Hotel.











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Master's Weekend continued...

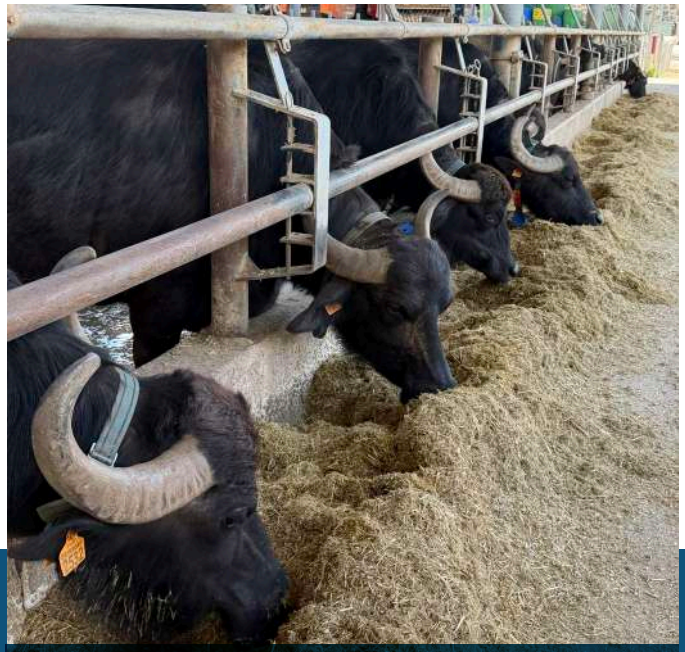


On Friday morning a tour of Paestum showed us incredible artefacts found at the ancient site.









Later on Friday morning, the group visited a local Buffalo farm to see how traditional italian mozzarella is made.





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Master's Weekend continued...

Then, the group enjoyed a sumptuous lunch under an ancient olive grove in Cliento, accompanied by local wines, pasta making and dancing.











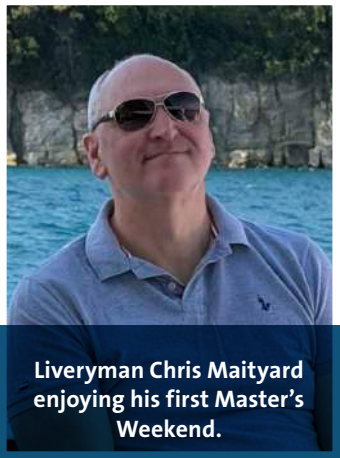


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Master's Weekend continued...

On Saturday morning it was time to take to the high seas! A boat tour of the Cliento coast saw the group enjoy incredible weather, and some even braved the cold waves before embarking on a walking tour of the local historic town.





Liveryman Chris Maityard enjoying his first Master's Weekend.













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Master's Weekend continued...

The weekend ended with a reception and dinner at Castello Vassallo – a local historic castle – accompanied by musical entertainment and finishing with a spectacular fireworks display.













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Festa D'Estate

A taste of Italy in London

In July, our Summer Social invited members and guests to the private Royal Air Force Club on Pall Mall for an entertaining evening of delicious food and wine with an Italian theme. We were honoured with the presence of The Rt Hon the Lady Mayor of London, Dame Susan Langley DBE and her Consort Gary Langley, accompanied by Sheriff & Deputy Keith Bottomley and his Consort Kevin Bradford. The evening included entertainment by the Singing Waiters and a celebration of the Lady Mayor's birthday!



Celebrating the Lady Mayor's birthday











The Lady Mayor presented the Master with a unique paperweight representing the heart of the City of London. The paperweight contains crushed stone from the whispering gallery of St Paul's and material from the foreshore of the River Thames.





Sheriff & Deputy Keith Bottomley (R) with his Consort Kevin Bradford.



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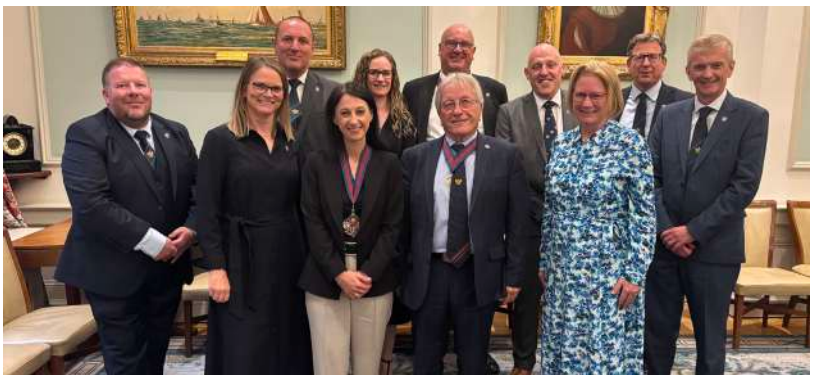
What else...?

2026 has been another busy year for the Master and our Company! Here's a quick round up of other City and Company events.



Royal Navy Submarine 125th Anniversary

Consort Mike Tattam represented WCoBM at this event at Mansion House on 24 June, pictured here with Master Upholders. There were 300 people and 89 Livery Companies in attendance. The event took place by kind permission of The Rt Hon the Lady Mayor and the Mayoral Consort.



Lunch for New Liverymen and Freemen – Watermen's Hall

The Master and Past Masters Williamson and Pepperrell welcomed new members of WCoBM to Watermen's Hall for an informal lunch where they could learn more about the Livery movement, our Company, and how they can engage with our Livery.





The Master and Consort attend Buckingham Palace Garden Party

The sun shone when our Master and Consort attended the annual Buckingham Palace Garden Party on 8 May, with their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales in attendance.





Our Master attended the annual City & Guilds Awards at Mansion House on 12 March, hosted by The Rt Hon. the Lady Mayor, Dame Susan Langley DBE. The day celebrated individuals demonstrating exceptional impact in education, training, innovation and craft. It also highlighted the long-standing partnership between the City of London Livery Companies and the City & Guilds of London Institute, now the City & Guilds Foundation.

The Lady Mayor and our Master presented the award and certificate to prize winner Richard Cornes of JCB Excavators, who also received £500 from WCoBM in recognition of his work. WCoBM nominated Richard due to his engaging and inclusive training style, which inspires apprentices and clearly demonstrates the positive impact of an apprenticeship on a person's career. His humility, dedication and expertise as a field engineer contributed to his strong mentorship.

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What else...? continued

The Past Master's Lunch in February brought many of our former Masters together for lunch at Wax Chandlers' Hall.

The Wax Chandlers are one of the oldest Liveries, ranking 20 in the official order of precedence, being incorporated by Royal Charter in February 1484.



Organised by Past Master Andy Williamson, our Company was represented at the Treloar's Gala Dinner in April, celebrating its 20th anniversary, and The Sheriffs' Ball in September, with both events raising an incredible amount of money for charity.







A City Wedding

Our Master & Consort were honoured to attend the wedding of Master Architect Chris Bicknell and his Consort Sara at the end of August, processing through the Square Mile, complete with Pikemen and Musketeers. Sixty Livery Masters accompanied by their Consorts processed from Mansion House with the Lady Mayor of London to the St Lawrence Jewry Church next to the Guildhall.

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What else...? continued

On the 7th September, our Consort Mike Tattam joined over 30 other Livery Companies for the annual Livery Halls Walk, visiting 40 Livery Halls across the city to raise money for the Lord Mayor's Appeal.





On the 22nd September our Master attended the launch of IndEX at the Old Bailey, a fantastic new initiative that brings together education and practical experience to make a genuine difference to young people and their careers.



On the 25th September, our Master and Consort joined other Livery Companies to see the convoy of over 120 London cabs depart for the annual Children's Magical Taxi Tour to Disneyland Paris. Our Livery proudly sponsors this special occasion, which gives children with life-limiting illnesses the trip of a lifetime.

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What else...? continued

Lunch for Members Retired from the Industry – Innholders' Hall

WCoBM held a lunch for Retired Members on 16th June at Innholders' Hall, hosted by the Master and Junior Warden Steve Durdant-Hollamby.







It was a busy day for the Master and Consort on Monday 16th March! Following the WCoBM City & Awards event, they attended the Plumbers' Company Banquet alongside Liveryman Jamie Fisher (pictured left) and above with Master Constructor Tim Fitch and his Consort Alison.



The Master and Consort were kindly invited to attend the Installation Dinner of Stephen Tanner, the new Master of The Worshipful Company of Upholders. The dinner took place on Friday 17th April at Vintners' Hall.

Livery accessories – do you have yours?

Whether you have recently joined the Livery, or have been a member for some time, make sure you speak to the Clerk about our range of Livery accessories. We have ties, pins and cufflinks. Ties are £20 each, Cuff links are £20 per pair and the Pins are £1. Our Master will also soon be announcing a new accessory specifically for female Freemen and Liverymen.

Email our Clerk at info@wcobm.co.uk







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