

Women in the Livery and in High Civic Office in the City

City of London

Women in the Livery and High Civic Office in the City

including

The Lady Masters Association

and

City Consorts

2nd Edition

A Research Paper

**(updated March 2024 with Women in the Livery Survey added March 2025 and Common
Hall voting information May 2025 and 3rd female LM Oct 25)**

by

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and**

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FOREWORD
TO THE 2ND EDITION

It is a privilege to be asked to write the foreword for the second edition of this paper on Women in the Civic City and Livery. It has been four decades since Dame Mary Donaldson GBE became the first female Lord Mayor of London. At the time, more than half of the livery companies were not open to female membership on equal terms as men. It would not be until 2020 that all City livery companies and guilds accept women on equal terms with men. This is progress that we should all be proud of, but equally reflect on the time it took.

I am particularly inspired by the story of Alice Holford, who served diligently for two decades as the custodian of the passage over London Bridge in the 15th Century succeeding her husband. During her tenure, Alice received the same wage as her husband had previously of 12 pence a week. It was recorded that the bridge's scribe had initially listed her as 'Alice, widow of Nicholas Holford', but a year later listed her only as Alice Holford, recognising her service independent of her late husband.

In this paper, Erica Stary has provided a valuable account of the history of women in the livery and civic life. It is an important piece of history that every leader across the City's liveries and institutions should bear in mind as we continue to build a better and more prosperous future together. I am honoured to be working with so many talented women across the Corporation and the Liveries, including my honourable friend, the Alderwoman for Aldgate and Sheriff, Dame Susan Langley DBE¹. Women are indispensable part of the City's civic life. They are our mothers, sisters, daughters, leaders, colleagues, and friends. They are the Lady Mayoresses who have been a steadfast support for the Lord Mayors throughout the generations.

As Erica's paper reminds us, women have had a long and significant impact in civic and livery life for a millennium. Medieval guilds were reliant on the skilled work of women and many buildings only came into the possession of the Livery or the City of London Corporation, such as the former Bricklayers Hall or Columbia Market, through acquisitions and donations from women.

Today, we have talented women in leadership positions across the City of London Corporation. This is not limited to the Chamberlain and the Mansion House Private Secretary. We now have the highest number of women serving in both the Court of Aldermen and the Court of Common Council. Following Dame Mary Donaldson's legacy, the City also saw its second female Lord Mayor in 2013 with Dame Fiona Woolf DBE, whose diligence and steadfast leadership have contributed greatly to sustainable finance across the world.

I hope, through reading this paper, readers will join me in recognition of the vital role of women in the City and encourage more to take up mantles of leadership in our beloved Square Mile and beyond.

The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London
Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli
February 2024

¹ Lady Mayor Elect 29 September 2025

PREFACE

Background

Looking for something to occupy herself during lockdown in the summer of 2020, the author decided to put together a brief factual paper on the creation of the Lady Masters Association. That quickly expanded into looking at women holding high civic office and gradually into researching the position of women in the livery since the middle ages and the contribution which women are making to the success of the City Livery movement which in turn supports the Mayoral team and thus “UK plc”.

Research has been very difficult due to having to carry out all research on line and being unable to visit Guildhall Library and read original texts but she has been greatly helped by a host of willing friends and acquaintances across the livery including clerks and archivists. To all of these she is extremely grateful.

The author is thrilled that the Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of the City of London, Alderman William Russell, has taken time out of his very busy life to write a foreword to the first edition.

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The author decided to update in 2023 as the year celebrates the 40th anniversary of the first Lady Lord Mayor and the first Lady Master. Inevitably, it has taken longer than hoped.

And, as in 2021, she is thrilled that the present Lord Mayor, Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli, has written a foreword for the 2nd Edition.

She would also like to thank profusely those others who have given of their time unstintingly to help her update.

Erica Stary

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Women in the Livery and High Civic Office in the City

Introduction

The paper is essentially an overview: it looks first at the momentous year for women in the City – 1983 and the background to that year, then at the contributions women have made from the early middle ages to the City’s prosperity and the background law which prevented them from doing more. It then explains the rationale behind the Lady Masters Association, and the relatively newly-created City Consorts group (who are mainly but not entirely women). There is also a short comment about women clerks and the emerging pre-year Masters groups. It does not look at the considerable amount of voluntary time and work put in by women (and men) who have been prepared to be and have been elected to serve as common councilmen and aldermen and in due course, if appropriate, as sheriff and/or Lord Mayor. The appendices also include a list, so far as can currently be ascertained, of ethnic minority people who have held office within the Livery, City and linked guilds.

The 1983 watershed

In 1983 there was an amazing occurrence in the City of London – not only was the Civic City promoting and electing a woman Lord Mayor, but also there was to be the very first woman Master of a livery company.

High Civic Office

The Civic City had been working its way towards the Lord Mayor (Dame Mary Donaldson as she shortly became) for some time. She was the wife of the future Master of the Rolls - Sir John Donaldson³ ⁴. They lived in the Temple⁵, she had time to spare and decided she wanted to fill it⁶. What better than to become a local councillor, or, in City parlance, a common councilman alongside her pre-existing position as a JP and the other voluntary works she undertook with enthusiasm. She took herself to Guildhall to find out how it was done. They were astonished (apparently), saying, “But, you are a woman!” to which she is alleged to have

³ As he then was. He had been appointed QC in 1961 and a High Court Judge in 1966 at which point he was knighted. He later became a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, Master of the Rolls in 1988 and a privy councillor. He was ennobled as Baron Donaldson of Lynton

⁴ He was, he told the author at the time, immensely proud of her

⁵ The Inner and Middle Temple Inns of Court are between Fleet Street and the Embankment. Inns of Court are part of the barrister legal set-up. Many barristers have offices (known as chambers) in the Inns and some, like the Donaldsons, are lucky enough to have accommodation there as well.

⁶ She said she was “never one for playing bridge or drinking coffee” and over the years did copious amounts of charitable work.

asked, “Is it unlawful for a woman to stand?”⁷. The official then advised her that, of course, she could stand, but she would not be elected. Notwithstanding his prophecy, shortly after (in 1966) she became the first woman ever to serve on the Court of Common Council⁸. She was a member for the Ward⁹ of Farringdon Without, North Side. There were other firsts: once they realised what a “good egg” she was, she was encouraged by the Civic City to stand as Alderman¹⁰, and became the first woman to take aldermanic office¹¹ in 1975 and the first woman Sheriff in 1981.

Oddly, in 1973, some eighteen months before Dame Mary’s appointment as alderman, another woman, the first ever, was elected to the Aldermanic Court: she was Edwina Coven¹². Edwina had stood for Dowgate Hill after the then senior alderman moved (apparently by custom) to Bridge Without Ward, leaving a vacancy but, for reasons which have never been disclosed, the Aldermanic Court, as was (the author is reliably informed) its right(!?), and despite the Ward having elected her by a clear majority of 54 to 30, refused to accept her¹³. She stood for a second time, and was elected again. Her Ward, which had voted this time 53-20, sent a petition signed by the majority of the voters to the Aldermanic Court supporting her. To no avail, she was rejected again. It is not known why, though Lord (Tim) Beaumont, in an article in the *Spectator*¹⁴ at the time, surmised that her face, for whatever reason, simply

⁷ She was clear in her view that one’s gender was wholly irrelevant, that one is either the right person for the position or one is not.

⁸ There are suggestions on the internet that Dame Mary was preceded by Edwina Coven, ie that Edwina was the first woman common councilman. The author has been assured by the City Archivist that this is not so. However, Mrs Coven was a very early common councilman.

⁹ The City has 25 Wards, each of which has one alderman and two or more common councilmen.

¹⁰ It is not clear which came first: the encouragement to be an alderman or the becoming of a liveryman as the two seem to have occurred close together. Her family believes, correctly, that she was one of the first women to be clothed by the Gardeners. That company has confirmed that she was clothed on 12 February 1975, having joined as a freeman on 31 October 1974. The Gardeners’ first woman liveryman was HRH The Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, clothed in 1974. Dame Mary joined the Gardeners’ Court in 1985 but never progressed to the chair.

¹¹ Dame Mary was not the first woman to be *elected* a City Alderman. The first to be *elected* was in 1973-74, see next paragraph.

¹² Edwina Coven was a freeman of the Loriners and had been a Common Councilman for some time. She was also deputy chairman of the City Magistrates Bench. She had been a major in the WRAC. She has been described as “redoubtable” by those who knew her, and there has been a call to have a statue in her honour in the City.

¹³ Edwina Coven was appropriately qualified to be an Alderman being both a citizen and a freeman of the City as required by an Act of Common Council of 15 April 1714 – an earlier ordinance of the Aldermanic Court (20 September 1402) had merely required that aldermen should be citizens.

¹⁴ 8 March 1975

did not fit. She did, however, in due course obtain the accolade of being the first woman common councilman to be elected Chief Commoner¹⁵.

Despite Dame Mary's success in 1981, it took a further 18 years (and a day at the polls following a demand for one at Common Hall¹⁶ in a contested election) before a second woman – Pauline Halliday¹⁷ – was elected Sheriff. At the time of writing this (2023) there have so far been seven other women sheriffs – Alderman Fiona Woolf¹⁸ as aldermanic¹⁹

¹⁵ Since 1987 there have only been five more women – Barbara Newman (1999), Joyce Nash (2003), Pauline Halliday (2007), Wendy Mead (2017) and Ann Holmes (2023).

¹⁶ In the City of London, it is a gathering, in Guildhall, of Liverymen from the various livery companies which gathering elects, usually by show of hands, the sheriffs. This gathering is termed "Common Hall" and for Shrieval elections takes place on Midsummer Day, 24 June. In the event of a dispute over the count, a poll may be demanded, as happens from time to time. The other Common Hall, again in Guildhall, is on 29 September, Michaelmas Day, for election of various civic officers at which the Lord Mayor for the year ensuing is identified.

¹⁷ Pauline, who died in May 2025, was awarded an OBE in 2008 for services to local government in the City. She had been a Deputy for Walbrook and in due course became Chief Commoner in 2007. She was Master Farrier in 2006 and Master of the Guild of Freeman in 2008. She was also the first ever female clerk appointed to a livery company (in 1985 by the Fruiterers) and chairman of the Royal Society of St George (City of London Branch) in 1996.

¹⁸ Fiona was elected Alderman for Candlewick Ward in 2007, was President of the Law Society for England and Wales in 2006 and became Lord Mayor in 2013. As part of her Mayoralty she created what has become an annual event: City Giving Day involving many City businesses and individuals. She also improved the way in which the charity The Lord Mayor's Appeal works. She was appointed DBE in the 2014 Birthday Honours. She has now been Master of four Livery Companies – more than any other non-royal woman – Solicitors, Plumbers, Builders Merchants and Wax Chandlers. The last have a splendid portrait of her as Lord Mayor hanging in their Hall. (Note, it has become more common in recent years for several of those who have been Lord Mayor to be sought-after as Masters, etc of Livery companies and also to offer honorary livery status. For example Sir Andrew Parmley has been Master of 4, including the Parish Clerks, and Sir David Wootton six, which include additional cover at the Woolmen after his initial term as extended by Covid ceased (three years in all), and the Watermen, and his last (as at 2025) Master Bowyer 2024-26. Fiona's husband, Nicholas, researched and published a fascinating book of *Lord Mayors' Portraits* for the period 1983 to 2013 which neatly covered the first two female Lord Mayors

¹⁹ The Civic City always proposes at least one alderman for sheriff each year, as custom (or, rather, a decision of the Court of Common Council in 1385) requires a Lord Mayor to have served as sheriff first. In 2020, due to the pandemic, it was pragmatically determined that the existing officers should serve another year, though the Lord Mayor himself (now Sir William Russell) had to be elected in the manner required by the Charter which election took place in an historic Common Hall at Guildhall. Interestingly, he commissioned an amazing bowl the design of which is based on the face masks we all had to wear during the pandemic which bowl is now part of the Mansion House assets. The silversmith was Grant Macdonald (who is both a past master Barber and past prime warden Goldsmith), has designed and made many shrieval badges and modern livery badges – the first of which was the Tax Advisers' badge based on St Matthew's (the tax collector) purse of provision (being part of their coat of arms. (When the author proudly wore that badge at a lunch of the Actuaries in July 2006, the then Master Actuary, Jeremy Goford, looked at it in amazement, demanded to know who had made it, and some three months later the Actuaries had their lovely egg-timer master's badge – the only one from which it is theoretically possible to drink.

sheriff, Wendy Mead²⁰, Fiona Adler, Christine Rigden, Liz Green²¹, Alderman Alison Gowman²² and Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley²³, the last two plus Fiona Woolf were also aldermanic sheriffs.

To date, there have only been two women Lord Mayors since King John (then residing in the Temple for protection from the Barons) granted the City the right to elect its own Mayor in 1215^{24 25}. But Dame Sue Langley DBE is now (as of 29 September 2025) Lady Mayor Elect. Apocryphally, it is said that Dame Mary only visited liveries during her Mayoral year that already accepted women members or undertook so to do but this appears not to be true.^{26 27}.

Women's position within the Livery and the City prior to the 20th Century

One cannot begin to understand the treatment of women in the Livery and City in the middle ages and later until one understands the background law. In essence, many of the classical kingdoms and empires based around the Mediterranean basin²⁸ had given women few (if any)

²⁰ Also elected following a poll. Polls are very expensive. Further, they also delay the work the newly-elected sheriff has to do before taking office on 28 September by way of finalising his/her shrieval badge, obtaining the appropriate gowns and other items of clothing, and finishing off his or her coat of arms (this last will be displayed at the Old Bailey along with all those of predecessors in office). (Note: having a coat of arms is customary but not compulsory and, despite women's place in law having changed significantly, women's grants are not equal to those of men – see Appendix III.) As a result of the cost, the Livery Committee, which oversees the election, makes attempts to prevent that cost in contested elections by asking the parties to agree that they will not contest the show of hands if the difference is more than 10% of the votes. But this cannot bind the gathering in the well of the Hall and overspill rooms (if any), and probably doesn't bind those standing either.

²¹ Two other women have stood in contested elections – in 2018 (Gwen Rhys, PM Glass Seller) and 2019 (Erica Stary, the author of this paper). Both feel strongly that in the 21st Century the Civic City should have at least one female and/or one person from the ethnic minority community in the team each year – and that it is good for the City to have contested elections.

²² A Past Master of both the Glovers and the Plaisterers.

²³ Dame Susan is a liveryman of the Insurers and the Drapers, also free of the Goldsmiths and received her DBE in 2023. She first became an Alderwoman (for Aldgate and was re-elected in 2023 having chosen to go for early election in order to avoid having an election during her expected shrieval year – aldermen and alderwomen submit themselves for re-election normally every six years) in 2018.

²⁴ Before then, the Sovereign appointed the Mayor, to which the City became entitled in 1189. The three mayors before 1215 were, unsurprisingly, men.

²⁵ The first *Lord* Mayor was Thomas Legge who was granted that title by Edward III for serving a second term in 1354. There has been no specific grant of the title to the City Mayoralty in general, rather it has been acquired by prescription – usage over time. Interestingly, there are 30 cities in the UK, which have a Lord Mayor (or Lord Provost, in Scotland).

The title of six of those Lord Mayors/Lord Provosts is “The Rt Hon. Lord Mayor/Lord Provost of [the City concerned]. The six cities are London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast, Glasgow and York. The holder of the office is not entitled to that appellation (viz “The Rt Hon [name]”) in his/her own right unless s/he is a privy councillor.

²⁶ One livery company, very concerned about her being the only woman at their dinner, invited one other woman (their assistant clerk) to join them.

²⁷ Several liverymen have recalled the preference, the family denies it and, as it is clear that she did attend livery events where there were no women liveryman, it seems to be a rumour which is not supported by fact.

²⁸ Interestingly, not the Egyptians. But the Romans, Athenians, and others imposed restrictive rules on what women could do legally without permission from the relevant man. For example, and in any event, there were restrictions on being witnesses in a trial, they had no banking or equivalent rights but they might have heritable rights.

rights, the common theme being that women were subjugated to which ever was the appropriate man in their life – such as father, husband, son, brother. The restrictions of the civil and criminal law to which the populace was accustomed also spread into the Church starting about a hundred or so years after the religion began to make sway.²⁹ This resulted in a secondary pressure which effectively made it normal for women to be subjugated, and the laws across Western Europe, including England especially after the Norman Conquest, followed suit. Whilst Magna Carta in 1215 gave women some rights³⁰, they were generally treated less favourably than men and that law varied on whether or not they were married. As a result, it was unlikely that a woman would hold any form of livery office as, should she marry, she would no longer be able to hold that office. She was in any event debarred by law from taking public office³¹. The effect of marriage in English law resulted in many benefits for her husband including the vesting in him of any real property she might own: these rights survived until his death even if she had died earlier, in exchange for which he was normally required to support her within his means³² (which meant the standard at which he chose to spend). Women acquired their husband's name (and status) on marriage and, as under the law he was responsible for her debts. he would often forbid her to trade. In the City, in the 1400s and 1500s, the City relaxed the rules³³ allowing women to run trades as a feme sole rather than as a wife provided the status of the trade was properly declared; in any event, many competent women were “allowed” by their spouse to work. In part, women's ability to work depended on the extent of shortage of labour due to lack of population. The many business cards used by the various businesses indicate the difficulties women had where their birth families had the “name” for quality so that they would find mechanisms of putting their birth family name on the card. Also the change of name on marriage coupled with the loss of status (being only an appendage of her husband) has meant that many women were “lost” in the system – they were no longer members or free so historians have found it difficult to trace their activities after marriage. As the population increased during the 15th and 16th centuries (and later), it slowly became less likely that married women would work but it would also

²⁹ The early Church (first and second century) had many women taking leading roles, so much so that later (male) writers assumed there were errors in the texts and altered female names to male. See for example <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>, <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/women-in-the-early-church>

³⁰ For example, widows' rights to property were protected.

³¹ There are known to be rare exceptions eg relating to hereditary offices, but none appears to have applied in the City of London.

³² Agency of necessity, which was abolished by the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act 1970, s 41

³³ It's understood that only it was only in the City of London that married women were allowed to work as a feme sole that is as if they were single provided, at least in the earlier days, it was made properly known.

depend on her particular skills. Women did acquire limited rights of inheritance and became entitled to carry out various trades on their own but they were always subject to severe limitations. English law gradually gave more rights than women had in Europe but it was not until the last hundred years or so that women began to acquire rights which gradually put them on a par with men³⁴. Women had many struggles to achieve parity³⁵. Those limitations help to explain the lack of women at senior levels across the Livery and in City government.

Women's Contribution

The reports made by the various Livery companies show just how important women have been as contributors. Where, for example, would Goldsmiths have built Goldsmiths' Centre if they had not been given a very generous donation of farmlands by Agas Harding, the widow of Robert Harding (a senior warden), in 1514? And their website acknowledges that the workshop of Eliza Godfrey produced some of the finest quality silver in Georgian England³⁶. Another example was the acquisition of Bricklayers Hall (now alas no longer in existence) from Eliza Dyall, Citizen and Tyler³⁷. Eleanor Coade (whose business was in Southwark and thus outside the City), a former linen seller, created Coade Stone³⁸, which resembled Portland Stone. Examples of items made from it are all over London, such as the Lion on Westminster Bridge, Schomberg House in Pall Mall, the Caryatids at the Sir John Soane Museum, and a

³⁴ The English husband had power over his wife's body, and, whilst this did not mean he could kill her with impunity, there was no concept of marital rape until late in the 20th century as a result of a legal decision in 1991. Likewise, he used to be (before domestic violence was addressed by Parliament) entitled to beat her so long as he did not disturb the public peace.

³⁵ For example, they could not qualify as doctors. This caused one woman, Margaret Bulkley, to adopt a male persona, and, as John Barry, she qualified as a doctor at Edinburgh University in 1812 and then served as a British army surgeon for over 40 years; it was only after her death that she was discovered to be female. Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson used a different tactic: that of qualifying as an apothecary in 1865. Once discovered, that loophole was closed but her hard campaigning resulted in the 1876 statute which enabled both men and women to be licensed as doctors. Lawyers had similar problems, but theirs were only resolved by the 1919 Act – despite all the efforts of many able and highly intelligent women hitherto, the English authorities and the Courts thwarted their education and abilities, on the grounds in part that no woman could be a person within the meaning of the then Solicitors Act – see *Bebb v Law Society* 1914 <https://first100years.org.uk/a-woman-is-not-a-person-a-review-of-bebb-v-the-law-society-1914/> – and the Bar likewise considered that because there had never been a female applicant, their regulations could not be read as being intended to include them – see Bertha Cave <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/women-in-the-law/how-bertha-cave-fought-laws-male-exclusivity/5102265.article>. The underlying difficulty was that such pioneering women threatened the *status quo* not only of the legal/medical profession, but also of the established hierarchy. There were many other fights in many other areas by many brave women, not least in the area of wishing to be able to vote (especially if they also paid tax! They were not the only ones: think of the reason for (and the result of) the Boston Tea Party).

³⁶ <https://www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk/company/today/stories/women-goldsmiths-company/>

³⁷ *They Built London* The History of the Tylers and Bricklayers by Penelope Hunting

³⁸ Coade Stone, the recipe for which was lost when Mrs Coade (as she was always known – she was unmarried) died and has possibly recently been rediscovered, is an artificial stone much used by architects and sculptors in the 18thC because its hardness and low porosity meant it was not subject to weathering and erosion. There still are over 650 sculptures made of Coade stone which have been traced around the world, eg Brazil, South Africa, Russia.

Swan at Vintners Hall to name but a few³⁹. The Fan Makers report that recruitment of women ran 50:50 with men in the early days. Fishmongers has had women members “for centuries”. The Fletchers comment that women’s smaller hands would have enabled them to fletch the arrows well. Several companies report always having had women members, whether as widows carrying on the family trade, as daughters via patrimony, or as women entering via servitude (apprenticeship) or redemption (not qualifying in any other way and thus paying a greater fee for entry). The Needlemakers noted that many women needlemakers were actually freemen of other companies – whose company they had entered by patrimony⁴⁰. Another example of this is given in Virginia Rounding’s paper *City Women* where she gives a list of 19 women freemen of the Musicians who, by trade, are milliners, chartsellers, victuallers, and so on.⁴¹ Haberdashers’ apprentices were 10 per cent women in the mediæval period and there was much greater growth in the 17th century. Merchant Taylors specifically state that women have always played a key role. Even companies which initially thought that they should preserve the trade for the men, (such as the Weavers, which initially had provisions preventing women, other than widows of weavers, from weaving) realised how useful it would be to encourage women and had their Ordinances amended. Considering the centuries which have passed, the regard in general social terms in which women were kept, the fact that many companies did not keep freedom records, only livery, the calamities of devastation such as the Great Fire and the bombing in the World Wars, it is astonishing that there is any documentation to show us what women did. But, from the records which remain, it is clear they ran flourishing businesses, they trained apprentices, they were highly skilled, they assisted their husbands, they made generous donations and are generally held in high regard by those who know about what they did.

Women and City Freedom

The Chamberlain’s Court stresses that the City has always granted freedom to women as well as men. Inevitably, historically, there were always more men who were freemen than women. Like men, they were able to acquire it by redemption, patrimony or servitude⁴². In addition, a

³⁹ Another is the reproduction of the Coat of Arms at Carpenters’ Hall which is on the wall immediately behind anyone handing in their coat.

⁴⁰ Having been born after their father became free of his guild/livery company

⁴¹ Virginia Rounding <https://virginiarounding.org/2020/04/22/a-brief-history-of-women-in-the-city/>

⁴² The right to acquire the City freedom by mechanisms other than through the livery did not arise until 1835. Interestingly, that (pre-1835) limitation resulted in disenfranchisement of many City residents (they did not want to or could not for whatever reason join the livery and pay the relevant fines (fees) as the sums were significant). In 1831 the population is estimated to have been about 122,000 whereas the freemen who could vote numbered about 20,000 – ie less than 1/6th of the relevant population. The Reform Act of 1832 enfranchised the “£10

widow, whose husband had the City freedom, had the freedom extended to her by courtesy during her widowhood so that she was enabled to continue to run his business without payment of the relevant fees. This is important since ordinances granted to the City by Edward II made it impossible to run a trade within the City unless one had also acquired the freedom⁴³. The courtesy rule relating to freedom did not apply to widowers in part because a married woman, even if free before her marriage, found her freedom in abeyance during (as lawyers used to say) coverture⁴⁴. Here, the custom in the City followed, as it had to, the limited rights in general law applying to married women⁴⁵.

There were other differences too. Whilst a daughter could become free by patrimony via her father, neither her son nor her daughter could become free via patrimony from her. Patrimony was from the father only, as the word implies. Further, she could only apply for freedom by patrimony if she were single – ie not married. It follows that she could apply before marriage, and after the marriage was over, but not during the marriage because of the general background law relating to married women (see above) and the custom (based on background law) of freedom being in abeyance during her marriage. The same also applied within the livery movement.

The first *honorary* freedom of the City given to a(n unmarried) woman was to Angela Burdett-Coutts⁴⁶ on 18 July 1872 in recognition of her outstanding charitable work and the gift of Columbia Market⁴⁷ in Bethnal Green to the City of London.

householders” both in the City and elsewhere (thus dealing with the infamous “Pocket Boroughs” which existed in various parts of England outside the City).

⁴³ See Fruiterers’ History (Gould 1912). The ordinance is 12 Edward II and is also referred to in Harry Druce (PM Marketer) “*The Freedom of the City. It’s [sic] History and Customs*” reproduced at <https://www.tylersandbricklayers.co.uk/images/stories/newsletters/newsletter1999.pdf>. The writer has been unable to track down an original copy. But it seems clear that being free makes one a part of the City Corporation which is why freemen and liverymen have always played such important roles within the City.

⁴⁴ The law relating to married women in the past was similar to, though not the same as, that applying to lunatics (as they were then called). There were many restrictions on what they could or could not do in law, eg whether they could run a business, own property, pledge credit, and so on. (Cases arising out of law relating to women after the Courts’ reorganisation between 1873-75 would be heard in what was then the Probate Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court, endearingly termed Wills, Wives and Wrecks by lawyers at the time.)

⁴⁵ *Supra*

⁴⁶ Baroness Burdett-Coutts was also given the freedom of Edinburgh. She was, amongst others, both an honorary Haberdasher and an honorary Turner. She was, apparently, described by Edward VII as “[a]fter my mother, the most remarkable woman in the kingdom”. His mother, Queen Victoria, conferred on her a *suo jure* [in her own right] peerage. Ever independent, when she was 67, she scandalised polite society by marrying her 29-year-old secretary. The second female honorary freeman was Florence Nightingale.

⁴⁷ Which she had established in 1869 as a 400 covered-stall food market in an area (Nova Scotia Gardens) which had become a notorious slum, in part not only because the area had begun to be used as a waste dump but also because of a local gang of body snatchers, two of whom were hanged for murdering one of the bodies they had sold to Kings College School of Anatomy. Today, it exists as a fruit and flower market on Sundays from 8-2.

Women as freemen and liverymen of Livery Companies

Evidence from Livery and City records indicates that most of the established “old” livery companies⁴⁸ had had women freemen and/or liverymen at least by way of courtesy^{49 50 51} as widows of freemen or liverymen members, others also had some or all of: women apprentices, women freemen by redemption, patrimony or by servitude, and women (often a widow taking over her husband’s apprentice) who were apprentice masters at various times⁵². As one liveryman put it cynically to the author, this might have happened to ensure that the widow and her family did not need to have recourse to charitable funds from the company. However, other liverymen⁵³ say that widows became free in order to carry on the business and also to enable them receive charitable support from the Company in terms of a pension and access to their Alms Houses should this be needed. In two cases, which emphasise the charitable nature of the livery, the Tallow Chandlers, concerned about the widow of their Beadle, made her their acting Beadle in 1800; similarly, the Woolmen in 1820⁵⁴. More positively, many liverymen regarded it very important to keep the family’s trade in place with its contacts and expertise and treated the widow as having “served her time”, (it being customary to consider the period of the marriage as being the equivalent of a seven year apprenticeship⁵⁵): the widow would have been very much involved in the business even if, for example, she did not actually put lead on roofs (as her Plumber husband might have done) but dealt with the finances and/or other aspects of the business. This allowed her to continue her husband’s business, without having to be formally admitted to the freedom (as a freesister⁵⁶) or livery, plus she was enabled to continue with her late husband’s apprentices so that another apprentice master need not be found for them. In some liverymen, this resulted in the widow becoming a liveryman as opposed to a freeman. However, when/if she remarried she would lose the rights extended to her by courtesy (both from the Livery and from the City). Where

⁴⁸ See Appendix IV

⁴⁹ *Infra*

⁵⁰ There is some indication that in some cases widows were in effect “licensed” to carry on the trade, being under the control of the company without necessarily being a member.

⁵¹ ie no payment or fine (to give it its local terminology) was exacted for becoming a freeman of the company as a widow of a freeman of that company (and likewise in the City for its freedom by courtesy).

⁵² As an example, Goldsmiths are very proud of their women freemen and have some wonderful work made by some of them.

⁵³ Eg the Coopers.

⁵⁴ Virginia Rounding *City Women Final* p 27 *op.cit.* She held that position for 11 years but was never officially appointed.

⁵⁵ Also, daughters were often treated as having learned their skills from the father.

⁵⁶ As a woman freeman was then usually termed - some companies, such as the Cooks, called their women members ‘freemaids’ and there were similar terms in other companies

her new husband was in the same trade, he would be able to take over hers, but, if he were not, he would not be allowed to assume control of the (previous husband's) business⁵⁷ which, unless there were others able and qualified to take it over, would go into abeyance and any apprentices would need to be found new masters. There was another phenomenon relating to women to which reference has been made above – they were often free by patrimony of their father's livery but actually ran a different business. He might for example be a mercer, she might trade as a needlemaker or silkwoman⁵⁸. And, as we have seen above, the contribution, of the women's trading abilities and skills made a huge contribution to the wealth of the City. There was one other woman who held an important job in early times: she was Alice Holford⁵⁹, the widow of Nicholas Holford the bailiff or toll collector from wagons crossing on and boats passing under London Bridge (and also those sheep drovers who were not free of the city bringing their sheep across the bridge into the City⁶⁰). Alice ran the job, reportedly very well, (there were inevitably different rates for different goods, etc,) till she died some 22 years later.

History does not⁶¹ tell us who the first ever woman liveryman was in any company. It is, however, clear that, notwithstanding that many women are in their company's records as a

⁵⁷ The Pattenmakers in their 2020 History show that in 1680 Thomas Carter of Westminster, who had married a Pattenmaker's widow and was using her deceased husband's trade to manufacture clogs and pattens, was ordered to forbear.

⁵⁸ There is a fascinating discussion of the English Silk Industry to be found at <https://guildhallhistoricalassociation.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/6-the-silk-industry.pdf> where it comments that as early as 1368, women silk workers complained to the City's Mayor and Aldermen as well as the King that a particular Lombard merchant was buying up all the raw silk in the market thus affecting their ability to trade due to the inevitable rise in cost – from 14s to 18s per pound). The merchant concerned was eventually found guilty of a customs offence. However, by the 1500s, men were entering the trade as Master Silkmen resulting in women becoming employees of those who could afford the then modern weaving machines. (silk was early into the industrial revolution) In 1631, the Court of Aldermen allowed one Peter Wood to operate 7 silk mills and Edward Mann 5 with women being relegated to winding raw silk. The cultivation of mulberry trees was also encouraged. The author has not yet discovered whether the berries were themselves converted into "made wine" (as referred to in excise duty terminology). (Mulberries make a fairly heavy home-made wine improved, in the author's view, where mixed with lighter berries such as blackberries. They are also delicious in a style of sloe gin where steeped in gin or vodka)

The first official reference to silk is in the 1363 Statute book (during Edward III's reign). Silk, gold and silver cloth were being woven in London by 1473.

⁵⁹ I owe a debt of gratitude to the Lord Mayor, Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli, for alerting me to this information – see his Foreword.

⁶⁰ Hence the importance of being free if eg you owned sheep you needed to take to market

⁶¹ And probably never will, as many ancient livery companies' early records are lost. The Gardeners believe they were the first livery to clothe a woman (as the expression is) and did so in 1974. However, information provided by many livers, such as the Glovers and the Fruiterers, shows that many companies, despite the change in status caused to women by marriage, had women liverymen. The Glovers have always had them eg their quarterage (subscription) book for 1675-78 show 91 liverymen of whom 25 were women. They were also unusual in having women in the livery throughout Victorian times. The Fruiterers' records, for example, indicate their first woman liveryman was Ann Gibson, in 1758. It may be, however, that the Gardeners are correct in that their grant of

liveryman, no woman had ever been Master of any of the Livery Companies or City Guilds before 1983⁶² ⁶³. One therefore needs to ask whether those women described as liverymen in their company's records were "real" liverymen on equal terms with men even if they had been "clothed in the livery"⁶⁴. The evidence does not appear to support this concept. Scant though it may be in many places due to passage of time, the Great Fire, the Blitz and other calamities, the data collected by many historians indicate that the expression with regard to women would be titular only. They might pay the quarterage, they might be reprimanded for poor work, but, because they would lose their freedom of the City on marriage or remarriage and at the same time their right in existing law to trade in their own (ie maiden) name unless their husband ratified their actions, it could not have been appropriate to have them taking part in the running of the particular company⁶⁵.

The Reduction of Livery membership in late Georgian and in Victorian times

During the late Georgian period and in the Victorian era, the membership of most livery companies, both men and women, reduced significantly. In seeking to answer the question as to why, it seems clear that this was due to many factors, including the many Enclosure Acts⁶⁶ in England and the Highland and Islands Clearances⁶⁷ in Scotland, both of which caused huge hardship to many of the clansmen, peasants and farm labourers and their families and caused them to move in their droves to the towns seeking work⁶⁸; the impact of the Industrial Revolution, destroying as it did, much of the hand-trade work; the loss of ownership of

livery was on an equal basis with their male counterparts as opposed to purely whilst unmarried or as a courtesy to a widow but it is by no means clear that they are right.

⁶² See Nigel Pullman's formidable and impressive spreadsheet on City Officers and Livery Masters etc at <http://www.liverycompanies.info/a-z-list-of-companies/lists/past-masters-archive.html>

⁶³ This is hardly surprising when one learns of the restrictions on married women's rights, see above.

⁶⁴ The Leathersellers have records of women being clothed – eg Janet Nightingale in the 1480s.

⁶⁵ There is at least one apparent exception: The Makers of Playing Cards' records indicate that one Barbara Byworth was a court assistant in 1648. It is believed she was the widow of a court assistant.

⁶⁶ The first Enclosure Act was in 1604 and the last in 1914. They often resulted in villagers losing both their farming strips and access to what had been common lands where they had hitherto been able to graze their animals. There were so many (over 5,000 enclosing more than 6.8m acres) of these Acts that the impact altered the English landscape. At the same time, they not only caused great hardship to the loser but also greatly benefited the farmer of the enlarged farm, and in turn provided labour for the Industrial Revolution.

⁶⁷ The clearances were mostly between 1750 and 1860. There were mixed reasons for them, some good, some not so. The impact on those evicted varied too. Many emigrated, others dispersed throughout the British Isles.

⁶⁸ At the time and for quite some time afterwards, it was considered that these enclosures and the clearances were dreadful. More modern historians do not necessarily always take that view and point to eg the better managed farms, the wealth this has now begun to give to the Highlands. To the author it appears to be horrific to the individual peasant and his/her family. Time will tell.

copyright caused by the 1710 Act;⁶⁹ the invention of machinery to carry out many trades; the expansion of towns and cities such as Birmingham, Sheffield and Manchester; the creation of the railway structure with its concomitant discovery of the “joys of commuting” and thus the move out of town to suburbs. The increasing middle classes and their increasing wealth resulted in their wives no longer being required or expected to contribute in any way to the family business or income. The loss in 1835 (as part of the general tidying up of inadequacies of rights to participate in local government occasioned by the changes in national participation by the 1832 Reform Act) of the privileges given to freemen of particular cities (including the City of London) and towns to trade which were denied to others who could not afford to become free, meant that one could carry on one’s trade with impunity – without joining or continuing to be a member of a livery company. There were many reasons including these which contributed to the changes in the social mores before and during the Victorian period where it became commonplace (except possibly in the working class) that “a woman’s place is in the home” or, as the Leathersellers say⁷⁰, “the earlier times when women had taken a more active role in London’s trade, commerce and public life were conveniently forgotten....” This massive social and economic change resulted in connections within the livery which women used to have as freemen (and less frequently liverymen) dwindling if not actually to zero then virtually so. There seems to be no evidence of any positive decision to stop having women, just that for one reason or another women were no longer applying, no longer doing apprenticeships, no longer needing to be a member to run their late husband’s trade so that the concept of a woman being a member or some sort of associate disappeared. There followed several generations of male livery before (most⁷¹) companies began to consider including women again in their membership.

20th Century advances

The notable beginnings of change from the Victorian and late Georgian approach⁷² started after the First World War, initially with the extension of the vote to suitably-qualified women

⁶⁹ This applied to books and other printed works and granted a 14-year legal protection for new books and 21 for any already in print. The Stationers Company had originally been granted a dominant monopoly-style power over publishing but lost that monopoly in 1695 when the power was not renewed.

⁷⁰ Leathersellers’ *History*.

⁷¹ As stated above, some liverymen never stopped having women members, eg the Drapers.

⁷² There had been the 1870, 1874 and 1882 Married Women’s Property Acts, which began the process whereby married women might keep their own earnings or own property in their own right as opposed to all their property being vested in their husband during marriage. Incidentally, despite the vigorous Women’s Tax Resistance League and other women’s, including the writer’s, personal efforts after the league closed, it was not until 1990 that a married woman’s income ceased to be taxed as if it were her husband’s income and the Revenue authority

in 1918 and then with the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 (the 1919 Act)⁷³. This has resulted in many (though not all by any means) 20th and 21st century Livery company and Guild creations having an egalitarian approach from inception save that, as they are restricted in granting membership to persons in the relevant trade, they are only able to have women as members who achieve the relevant qualifications - and apply to join - such as the Honourable Company of Master Mariners⁷⁴ which initially required a member to have a Foreign Going Master Mariner's certificate as a pre-condition – going to sea is still rare for women⁷⁵. The second, the City Solicitors⁷⁶, was at the time of its creation also the City's local law society⁷⁷ and one can still only join if one is working or has worked as a solicitor in the City (now extended to include Canary Wharf).

Appendix IV, is interesting to read as many of the early livery companies clearly had women freemen – eg the Spectacle Makers' first woman freeman was admitted in 1699, and their first liveryman in 1919. They say there was no obvious reason (looking at it in 2020) why women were not made liverymen earlier, but the author considers that the reason would have been the state of the law relating to women before recent times. The first woman to pass their technical exams so as to become an ophthalmic optician did so in 1898. Her success caused such a stir that

was prepared to write to her rather than her spouse – there had been minor tinkering in the 1970s which removed her earned income from the joint pot. The "joint taxation" mechanism was very discriminatory, for example, the Inland Revenue (as it then was) would only write to the husband, so that the husband would get the reply to a wife's letter; the husband had to return his wife's income and thus had to know what it was, she on the other hand was not privy to his income receipts. Whilst there was at least one mechanism for getting around this, (by the wife being appointed her husband's agent for tax purposes) not many people would have been able to use that route. For a talk on the Tax Resistance League see the History of Tax section (under Events) of the Tax Advisers' website (taxadvisers.org.uk) and click on NO VOTE, NO TAX a talk delivered in October 2017 and recorded later on 4 November 2020.

⁷³ This was the Act which enabled women, suitably otherwise qualified, to join the professions, to sit on juries, to be granted degrees (assuming the University concerned was prepared so to grant – it took Cambridge until 1947), whether or not they were married (it is presumably this dependency on the husband under the law at the time which gave rise to the marital name change from her father's to her husband's in the same way as anyone "owned", when she passed from the jurisdiction of and dependency on "ownership of" her father to her husband, on marriage).

⁷⁴ The first of the "modern" companies, no 78, formed in 1926

⁷⁵ The original requirement has been modified, and their first woman joined by servitude (ie following an apprenticeship). However, the author has recently met a woman whose first attainment after school was to start the process and she obtained the 1st Mate's Foreign Going certificate but it is clearly very rare even to get this far. She, Dr Nina Baker DL, was Deacon of the Glasgow Hammermen in 2023

⁷⁶ The author's mother company, the City Solicitors, obtained its livery during the Second World War and it is believed that women suitably qualified would have been able to join at that stage and see further below in Appendix IV. The City Solicitors was originally formed in 1908 and celebrated its creation at a banquet at Mansion House 21 January 1909. Women were not eligible to be solicitors until after the Sex Disqualification Act 1919. The first to qualify were in 1923.

⁷⁷ Separation between local law society and livery did not occur till January 2007.

initially women were barred from taking the exams on the somewhat spurious grounds that if women could do the work, the value, and thus wages, would fall⁷⁸.

City Freedom extended to Married Women

In the Civic City, the refusal to grant freedom to married women continued, notwithstanding the 1919 Act, until Lady Parsons, a married woman and a redoubtable engineer⁷⁹, applied, was refused, and objected, quoting the Act. In the result, the City custom was altered to comply with the change in the law. Lady Parsons herself was the third such married woman to be granted the freedom (on 26 July 1923), the first two being Edie Anne Knight and Harriet Ann Sladen⁸⁰ on 20 April 1923. It should be noted that the other customary right – that of freedom by patrimony via female freemen (or freesisters) – was not extended to their children till 1976⁸¹. Whilst there was no such pre-1976 limitation to children of freemen fathers, daughters could only, before 1923, qualify for freedom of the City by patrimony whilst single or widowed (or divorced).

Women Masters

Despite the 1919 Act and the slow but inexorable rise in the numbers of women entering into the professions and industry, it was not until 1983 that a woman became Master of any company – her company was the Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (WCCSA)⁸² and she was Sylvia Tutt⁸³, lovingly remembered by all who knew her. In the appendices there is a

⁷⁸ See Virginia Rounding's report <https://virginiarounding.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/recognition-of-women-in-the-city-of-london-research-paper.pdf>. The author heard similar tales of potential woe from three of her fellow male law lecturers in the 1960s as they tried (but failed) to oust her from her job because of that fear. The author also has a dim memory of learning at school that women doing the same job used to earn at the rate of two thirds that of men, but has been unable to track down any confirmation. Others to whom she has spoken have similar memories.

⁷⁹ Lady [Katharine] Parsons, married to Sir Charles Parsons, oversaw the Tyneside First World War female armaments workforce (for which she was made the first Honorary Fellow of the North East Coast Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders), was the founder and second president of The Women's Engineering Society, and was also admitted as a freeman of the Shipwrights, an honour granted to her not just because she was the consort of a Past Master, but also because she herself worked in the industry *and* she also made an outstanding contribution to the company during her husband's year of office (Shipwright members must work in the shipping industry). The Shipwrights did not at the time grant livery to women, they now do and appointed their first woman Master (in the Shipwrights termed Prime Warden) in 2022. Lady Parsons died in 1933.

⁸⁰ The writer has been unable to discover anything about Edie Knight (née Cooper) or Harriet Sladen (née Brock) other than that the former was born in Cripplegate in 1870, and the latter in Essex in 1861 and they both obtained their freedom on the same day.

⁸¹ In the author's view, this should have happened at the same time as the review took place on married women, as it is another clear discrimination point which would have been covered by the 1919 Act.

⁸² Obtained livery status in 1978 as no 87.

⁸³ Sylvia later became the first woman president of the City Livery Club in 2001-02 and the second woman Master Scrivener in 2007. She died in 2012.

copy of the address given by a later Master of the WCCSA in January 2024 which clearly shows her as a dynamic, confident and competent individual with a deep commitment not only to the Institute of Chartered Secretaries but also to the livery generally, as well as elsewhere⁸⁴. The second and third was HRH The Princess Royal who became Master of the Farriers⁸⁵ in 1984 and, in 1986, Master Carman⁸⁶.

At the end of 2002, (twenty years later) there had still only been twenty-two women Masters, despite the fact that all companies bar one (the Bowyers⁸⁷) change⁸⁸ their figurehead each year and during that period there would have been (allowing for the Bowyers and new livery companies) an annual average of ninety-nine companies (and thus 1,980 appointments of Masters, Prime Wardens, and Upper Bailiffs⁸⁹).

By the beginning of 2013, the average numbers appointed each year had begun to increase – there had now been seventy-nine appointments of a total of seventy-one women. Some women have been appointed more than once, such as HRH The Princess Royal who, at the time of writing (May 2025), has been appointed eight times⁹⁰ and is also the Perpetual Master of the Saddlers⁹¹ and Dame Fiona Woolf, who carried out her 4th Mastership, this time of the Wax Chandlers in 2023-24⁹², (having been Master of the City Solicitors, Plumbers and Builders Merchants). Fiona also became the second ever woman Lord Mayor in 2013⁹³. One of the gifts she received was a beautiful lead planter made and donated by the Plumbers. She felt strongly that the planter should not be hidden in her garden but more widely on view. It can be seen in the inner garden at Guildhall.

⁸⁴ See Appendix V

⁸⁵ Founded 1356, precedence no 55.

⁸⁶ Founded 1517. The Carmen is the only company to receive livery during Victorian times (1848), precedence no 77.

⁸⁷ The Bowyers change their office every even year. Their first known record is 1363.

⁸⁸ The Covid 19 pandemic has caused some exceptions to the usual rule as companies seek to ensure their Master is able to carry out his/her original plan – this has resulted in several companies extending the period of office to two years or eighteen months.

⁸⁹ Male:Female Master ratio during the first twenty-year period from 1983 – 99.9888889 Male:0.01111111 Female

⁹⁰ All save the Master Mariners, were one year appointments. She served 2 years, 2005-2007 as Master Master Mariner

⁹¹ The Saddlers' annual (non-Royal) appointment is a Prime Warden.

⁹² Due to the Plumbers having extended the Mastership of her successor because of the pandemic, she became, unusually, Immediate Past Master of two different companies, the other being the Builders Merchants.

⁹³ Fiona was given her Damehood in 2014 following her Mayoralty. It was during her year as Law Society of England and Wales President (2006-2007) that she was approached to see whether she might be interested in becoming an Alderman (for Candlewick Ward). In practice, she was a high-flying international lawyer who *inter alia* worked for some thirty to forty different governments

When Dame Fiona was appointed Master Plumber in October 2018, she coincidentally became the 150th female Livery Master appointment. She became the first non-Royal lady Master to have been made Master of a livery company four times when she became Master Wax Chandler in 2023⁹⁴, ⁹⁵ Judy Tayler-Smith holds the (non-royal) women's record (five) for the most top jobs in guilds if one adds in the south London guilds and the livery-connected groupings such as the City Livery Club⁹⁶.

At the end of 2023, the 40th anniversary year of the first lady Master, the total number of appointments of women masters was 249, but, as some women have held more than one mastership (see above), the total individual women who had been appointed were 229⁹⁷. Number 250 was appointed in January 2024, being Catherine Carr, master for the second year running of the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers. (She ran a spectacular year in 2023 celebrating the company's 400th centenary with, inter alia, an outstanding and very successful exhibition at Guildhall showing the craftsmanship and skills nurtured by the GSWD which exhibition included a fragment of the only known surviving piece of a dress once owned by Queen Elizabeth I, the 1911 coronation dress of Queen Mary, consort of George V, the jubilee cape (still worn for special occasions) created for the Diocese of London and its Bishop to celebrate the silver jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 1977, and many other exquisitely-created items.)

The Lady Masters Association

The History relating to the creation of the Lady Masters Association is set out in full in Appendix I, suffice to say it started as a friendship group from a few women who met up when they were all Masters at about the same time and wanted to stay in touch. They did not, however, create a formal group until 2015, which was started as a result of encouragement from Dame Fiona Woolf and (whilst she was non-aldermanic Sheriff) Fiona Adler.

⁹⁴ The year before, in July 2022, the author equalled Dame Fiona's then record of three masterships by being sworn in as Master Tin Plate Worker alias Wire Worker.

⁹⁵ 2023-24 was a very special year for the Woolfs as Fiona's husband Nicholas was Master Gardener (and a Past Master Tax Adviser). They are the sixth couple to be Masters at the same time, in their case overlapping for roughly 11 months, the first couple is believed to be Joanna (Glass Seller December 2005-06) and Robert (Actuary July 2006-07) Thomas.

⁹⁶ In addition to being Master of both the Upholders and Basketmakers, Judy has been President of the City Livery Club, Master of the Tanners of Bermondsey, and Foreman of the Guildable Manor of Southwark. She was then lured to the Glasgow Trades House and become Deacon (the term in Glasgow for master) of the Incorporation of Wrights in 2024. In 2025 she became vice-president of the Burns Club in London.

⁹⁷ *Lady Masters Historical Records* published contemporaneously, but usually revised and updated annually and (normally) available on the Lady Masters website.

Its impact on the City has been primarily the encouragement it gives to women wardens by running regular events to enable them to “*Ask all the questions I wish I had known before I became Master*” and to build up connexions and knowledge before taking up their respective offices. The Lady Masters have also been involved in two floats in the Lord Mayor’s Show. The first in 2013 to support the second woman Lord Mayor was not formally run as such by the LMA which did not then exist. The second, in 2018, was to celebrate the centenary of (some) women being granted the vote. More details are in the historical article in Appendix I.

Admission of Women into Livery Companies⁹⁸ in modern times

It clearly took many companies, both ancient and modern, quite some time to make up their minds to admit women on equal terms with men. For example, one livery company Master managed to persuade its court that women should be admitted, but the decision was considered so controversial that no-one felt able to propose any woman for the next 4 or 5 years. Another company was in effect forced into granting women membership where a liveryman’s daughter, who wished to become free of the City by patrimony, found she was thwarted – to be admitted by patrimony meant using the same route as her father, ie via membership of his livery company. It was only when threatened with press coverage that they caved in – she in due course became Master of that company, so the company concerned clearly became very happy with the decision.

Another company, having persuaded itself to allow women in, gave livery to one woman, and within twelve months made a new decision that only “women of great distinction” should be admitted. It took some 20 years before a review of that decision, coupled with the need to have more members, resulted in women being admitted on the same terms as men.

There are many similar stories. To save their blushes, no names are mentioned here, but they will know who they are. The writer observes that it was really the same in the professions and in industry⁹⁹. It took time before women began to be seen as being as competent and as useful,

⁹⁸ Described by the *New York Times* in as late as 2003 “as a mixture of charitable trusts, gentlemen’s clubs and guardians of craft standards and training”.

⁹⁹ The author has personal experience (admittedly in her early 20s) of being initially refused entry to her professional body HQ by the front door, it only being members (assumed, apparently, to be men only despite eg women coming top in the exams rom time to time and, historically, the first woman qualifying in 1923) who were allowed through that hallowed portal; and many (*soi-disant*) gentlemen’s clubs had their own peculiar practices, such as requiring women guests (where such were allowed) to enter via the basement or tradesmen doors, providing no safe place for women’s outdoor clothing, and even preventing them from walking on certain carpets. The author has never met those sorts of problems at any livery function she has attended over the last forty or so years and has always been made to feel very welcome, but has met them at “gentlemen’s” clubs.

witness how long it has taken to have more than token numbers of (very able) women¹⁰⁰ as partners in City practices and women on the Boards of FTSE 100 companies. And it was the result of a change in social structure arising from and after the Second World War.

The statistics produced from the livery company survey¹⁰¹ shows that there are six (ancient) companies which offered livery before 1970 and, in the case of four of them, continued so to do throughout their history and so have not had the (at times) agonising discussions as to whether to extend livery to women which others have had (but, as seen above, it would not have been until the background law changed that women would have been able to be on equal terms with their fellow male liverymen), nine which opened livery to women in the 1970s, seventeen in the 1980s, fourteen in the 1990s and the balance this century. Most of the 21st century extensions to women were around or shortly after Gavyn Arthur¹⁰² and his civic team made it clear that they would not be visiting any livery company which did not provide equal access men and women. There are four companies which have not yet provided any information but clearly all those four accept women as they have each had women masters, and all the modern companies save three have been open to women from the start, or, in the case of the City Solicitors, from when the law changed in 1919 (though it is fair to add that it appears they were not tested by any applications till the 1970s...). The younger guilds and companies without livery plus the two ancient non-livery Worshipful Companies are all open to both sexes on an equal basis. See Appendix II for a simple breakdown.

The survey shows that there is now no City livery company or guild which does not accept women on equal terms with men. What is normal in the 2020s was certainly not so in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and even in the early part of the first century of the second millennium.

City Consorts¹⁰³

Another major change which has taken place gradually over the last fifteen to twenty years is the visibility and activity of livery company consorts – where in the past they might be invited to one or two events, today they run their own consorts' events, they are frequently invited with the Master to other livery company events. Increasingly, they have their own separate

¹⁰⁰ Many women who have “made it” will, if pressed, say that they only did because they had worked harder than anyone else and that it is far easier for a less able man to succeed than a woman.

¹⁰¹ *Op.cit.* Appendix II

¹⁰² Sir Gavyn Arthur, KStJ, GCFO, was Lord Mayor in 2002-2003. He was a passionate believer in equality.

¹⁰³ <https://www.cityconsorts.org>

consorts' year association¹⁰⁴ or are full members of the main past masters association for their year as consort. The result is that men and women in the livery include not only those who are liverymen, freemen or yeomen etc of their companies, they also include the spouses, etc. of officers. Whilst many consorts in the 21st century will be liverymen in their own right, others have no specific link apart from their spouse, partner, sibling, friend, or parent for whom they are acting as consort. The author considered this article, though originally intended to be about women liverymen, women masters and women in High Civic Office, would not be complete without looking at what has happened in the area of consorts, where the majority have hitherto been women, despite there being, as a result of the increasing numbers of women masters, increasing numbers of men becoming consorts.

In the livery year 2015-16 the wife, Von Spofforth¹⁰⁵, of the then Master Chartered Accountant looked critically at what consorts could contribute. She realised that many were painfully unprepared for their year "in the limelight"¹⁰⁶. In many cases, they had merely had a late handover from their predecessor, whom they might not even really know. Perhaps they had not been involved in the livery company while their spouse was progressing towards the Master's year. The companies' clerks, she realised, did not have the time to help, they were far too busy doing their jobs. She set about finding a solution.

Gathering a group of like-minded consorts, she created City Consorts.¹⁰⁷ The Society was greeted with huge enthusiasm from past consorts, current consorts and those on the way. Further, many livery officers – Masters, Wardens – and the Civic City, such as the Mayoralty, were very enthusiastic and actively supportive. There was clearly a hitherto unmet need.

City Consorts had its first AGM in 2018, attended by (*inter alia*) the then Lady Mayoress, Samantha Bowman. It quickly acquired well over 200 members and runs a very active social

¹⁰⁴ The 2015-16 group is a typical example – the Masters are Phoenix and the Consorts Firebirds – both named for the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire in 1666.

¹⁰⁵ Von is now a liveryman of the Bakers

¹⁰⁶ Several livery companies expect their consort to give an after-dinner speech at one of their "in-house" events each year. This may well come as a complete surprise where the person has not been properly briefed. Some companies, such as the Plumbers, have a booklet, regularly updated, specifically designed to help those working their way towards high office and their consorts understand what they are letting themselves in for, including clothing and likely costs.

¹⁰⁷ In earlier days, most consorts would have been the wife of the Master. In mediæval times, a wife would be known as Mistress [husband's surname] and so it was in the livery. Many companies' regulations make reference to the Mistress (or similar word). Unfortunately, as many words change their meaning over time, the word Mistress has acquired unfortunate connotations and many people do not like the term which also causes some (male) masters to make smutty jokes on it (alas). Now that there are increasingly more men taking up the role, it is slowly being taken over by the term Consort (though the author's husband loved being called the Mistress Tax Adviser).

programme designed to be fun, informative and to prepare those women and men whose other halves¹⁰⁸ are working their way into the Master's position in their own livery. It allows the consort to feel confident about that livery company, to know what clothes to wear at what function, how to deal with the Loving Cup¹⁰⁹, sung grace¹¹⁰, the rose bowl¹¹¹ and so on; and it gives them a whole range of information about the City, its history, pageantry, and the place of the Livery within that. It has had a very positive and beneficial effect which can only be of benefit to the whole Livery movement and the City¹¹².

City Consorts has found that future consorts who join approximately two years before their year, or when their spouse is a Warden, derive the most benefit. Most of the events are social and every event has a Livery theme. Future consorts can learn from members who have already served as consort and from those currently in post. It is particularly useful to get to know other consorts who will be in their year group. By the time they become consorts themselves, they will always see a familiar face at an event. Often the consort knows more of their peers than the newly-installed Master.

City Consorts' website and private social media pages are all about sharing experiences and offering events to attend, where members – future consorts – can gain confidence and knowledge before their year. Von, and many others, are delighted that City Consorts has firmly established itself in the Square Mile and has earned support from so many quarters. All look forward to watching it grow and grow. City Consorts is now run by Sonya Zuckerman¹¹³ and her team.

¹⁰⁸ Usually a spouse or partner, but could be a friend, a brother, sister, daughter, son.

¹⁰⁹ This ceremony takes place after the livery meal has finished and is based on the concept that the drinker must be protected from being stabbed (as happened to King Edward the Martyr/Confessor 975-978, who, on being offered a drink by his stepmother, was stabbed in the back – if one is holding a large two-handled goblet one is unable to see any danger oneself), there are thus 3 people standing at any one time. The person who has just drunk turns to his neighbour, who stands and takes the two-handled loving cup from him – that person now guards his back, the lid is removed by the person who will drink next. Whether the guarder faces or backs the drinker depends on the custom of the livery concerned, at least one of which also has a dagger. There is a splendid *Punch* cartoon “The Man who drank the Loving Cup”. As a result of the pandemic, the City moved to have chocolates rather than alcohol, but the old custom is now beginning to be reinstated.

¹¹⁰ This is usually the 1545 *Laudi Spiritualis*

¹¹¹ A large bowled platter containing rosewater into which one dips the corner of one's napkin which is then dabbed behind the ears as an (alleged) aid to digestion.

¹¹² Von's podcast, requested by Paul Jagger as part of his Voices of the City of London series is at <https://cityandlivery.podbean.com/e/von-spofforth-chairman-of-city-consorts/>

¹¹³ Past Mistress Cooper, now (2024) Renter Warden of the Art Scholars, and a Cooper.

Informal Year Groups Pre-Advancement to Master

There has, also, been a tendency in the last four or five years for an informal year group¹¹⁴ of probable¹¹⁵ masters to be set up one to two years prior to the expected year of office. This enables them to get to know others whom they are likely to meet, in advance of their year. It forges camaraderie. It exchanges knowledge. And the informal groups also link with City Consorts which, as stated above, enables the prospective consort also to make his or her own friends and contacts around the livery. It is to be hoped that these informal groups, which are currently driven by the enthusiasm of individuals who are in the frame for Master in their own company, continue as it can only be of benefit to the City and Livery as a whole.¹¹⁶ The author of this paper was (January 2021) approached to see if, as well as running a pre 2021-22 prospective Masters group, she were also running a consorts group for their consorts as the prospective consort concerned wanted to meet up with her opposite numbers on a less “formal” basis in addition to being a member of City Consorts. Steps were put in place. There is clearly a need¹¹⁷. She has also asked the Lady Masters Association if they will help by telling those attending their Wardens’ evenings just how much more they and their companies will get out of their year as Master if they know a wide collection of other people who are Masters at the same time.

¹¹⁴ Initially motivated mainly by those who have had the privilege of being Master earlier thus knowing how important it is to make contacts with one’s peers in other companies. Adèle Thorpe ran a very successful one prior to her taking up the Presidency of the City Livery Club in 2019, and encouraged Lars Andersen (Entrepreneurs) to run the following year for 2020-21. Erica Sary ran 2021-22 though was herself been moved, due to Covid 19, to 2022-23. Clive Grimley (Glover) took up the cudgels for 2024 whilst Lars (now as World Trader) is running 2025. The author was asked by the presumptive LM to help her organised a data base for 2026 and its Whatsapp group is very active. Jat Wasu (Entrepreneur) is running 2027. Sadly, some companies refuse to allow their likely master to be known outside their company so that they and their consort are unlikely to take part in pre-year groups and City Consorts – to their personal great loss and also to the loss of the company concerned.

¹¹⁵ Except in very rare circumstances, no-one can be absolutely certain of the appointment until elected to be Master at the relevant Election Court.

¹¹⁶ It can be notoriously difficult to find out who is likely to be Master in which year of companies to which one does not belong, and to find ways of contacting them – GDPR has not helped. The Makers of Playing Cards now run an annual fun evening for junior wardens which is a very good way of beginning to create the contacts for setting up the group. What’s needed there is a massive card-swapping exchange as well! The writer has also started pressing for there to be an addition to the Livery Picture Book by the addition of Wardens in the year immediately before (presumably) becoming Master. She was also been told that she had the best database for livery masters in the 2022-23 year. She is hoping to be able to find a better mechanism which will be easy to run and be available to those, eg, running the Livery Masters Weekend away. She was asked by the likely Lord Mayor for 2025 to produce a database of likely masters for her year 2025-26. The group concerned setup what appears from outside to be a thriving whatsapp group

¹¹⁷ See above fn 111

Livery Company Clerks

Another area where there has been a massive change in the last forty years has been the increase in women clerks. The first two appear to have been appointed in 1985, though several companies had female assistant clerks earlier. The longest appointment to date is 33 years¹¹⁸ and the first ever appointment of a female clerk was in 1985¹¹⁹. Almost 60 worshipful companies have had women clerks, most for periods in excess of 3 years and almost 20 companies have had more than one. It is known that there was at least one company which felt unable at the time (during the 1980s) to promote a very able woman assistant clerk (at least one liveryman commenting about this said that the appointments board most probably contained a person believed to be “possibly not the greatest enthusiast for votes for women”). Another ancient company which appointed a woman assistant clerk in 1971, were so impressed they not only elevated her to clerk but in due course she became their first woman Master¹²⁰.

Grant of Arms

A problem, which is not limited to livery and City, but which affects especially those women who obtain high civic office, is that relating to the granting of arms (coats of arms). These, for those of us from England and Wales, come from the College of Arms here in the City on Queen Victoria Street.

One might have thought in the 21st century that in a thriving, pulsating, thrusting, modern City there would be nothing reminding us of our past when women were, as described by John Stuart Mill, “*bondservant[s]... no less so... than slaves commonly so called*”¹²¹. But one has to consider the College of Arms, a Royal Corporation, whose officers are part of the Royal Household. Whilst it is accepted that arms were used by knights in battle so that they could be identified at a time when it was relatively rare (but there are examples¹²²) for women to be

¹¹⁸ Amanda Jackson of the Chartered Surveyors. Amanda hopes to be in office for at least 35 years.

¹¹⁹ The Fruiterers, which appointed Pauline Halliday.

¹²⁰ Freda Newcombe, Upper Bailiff of the Weavers 2008

¹²¹ In his 1869 essay *The Subjection of Women*, the philosopher John Stuart Mill commented “We are continually told that civilization and Christianity have restored to the woman her just rights. Meanwhile the wife is the actual bondservant of her husband; no less so, as far as the legal obligation goes, than slaves commonly so called.

¹²² Jeanne D’Arc, Boudicea and the possibly mythical Amazons spring immediately to mind, and, whilst there are others, more recently, the Mino in Benin, the Finnish Red Women, the Norwegian Jegertroppen and the Kurdish women’s army YPJ, etc.

involved, resulting in the customs which prevailed clearly applying to men, those granted to women in 21st century, admittedly for a lower fee, are shrouded in sex discriminatory rules.

Should any woman (save for Royalty), whether of the City or elsewhere, be she freeman, liveryman, master, sheriff, common councilman, alderman or lord mayor, high sheriff (in the counties), barrister, judge, professor, bishop, officer in His Majesty's forces and so on, wish to apply for a grant, she will discover that something of the experience of being a chattel creeps back into her life.

In the City, the tradition is that the sheriffs and lord mayors have their own coat of arms. The shrieval coat is left on display with all other sheriffs' grants in the Old Bailey¹²³. Any woman who succeeds in being elected sheriff will find herself paying a visit to the Queen Victoria Street premises unless, a rare case, she has inherited¹²⁴ her father's arms - which brings up other complexities relating to for example, inheritance by her children, how her husband, if he is armigerous, displays hers on his coat¹²⁵, and so on. The two aldermanic sheriffs for 2023-24, Dame Susan Langley DBE and Bronek Masojada, have both determined not to have coats of arms. She because she was not allowed a shield, a helm, a crest or mantling and he in solidarity¹²⁶.

What will a woman desirous of or needing a coat of arms be able to have? First of all, she will not be entitled to have a helm, crest¹²⁷ and mantling - these being martial devices, are clearly not befitting the "weaker sex" (although not in Scotland where Lord Lyon happily grants crests to women).

Second, she has to have a lozenge (naturally, she does not need a shield, she doesn't go into battle though this was not always the case¹²⁸, unless married to an armigerous man (one who

¹²³ Not all sheriffs have obtained a coat of arms – their "slot" at the Old Bailey hitherto has had instead their initials. The 2023-24 sheriffs have done more than that, see below.

¹²⁴ Only possible if her father has no sons to inherit

¹²⁵ He normally will not though there is a mechanism for him to show her father's arms on his "by pretence".

¹²⁶ The shield slots for the two sheriffs have been filled with two creations – for Dame Sue her shrieval badge which includes a dragon and was designed by Grant Macdonald has been converted into a badge by Quentin Peacock which also makes a very fine flag and Bronek Masojada's has had similar treatment. Both were transcribed for the Old Bailey plaques by Clunie Fretton. See <https://cityandlivery.blogspot.com/2024/04/a-new-tradition-for-shields-in-old.html>. There is also a pressure group *Equality of Arms* which can be found on LinkedIn. For a picture of these Old Bailey shields see Appendix III

¹²⁷ Despite at least two women in recent times being granted one.

¹²⁸ The Kings of Arms ruled in 1561 that unmarried, divorced and widowed women's arms must be displayed on a lozenge. Lozenges were used by some men up to 1370. The pressure group *Equality of Arms* believes both male and female should have the choice of whether the grant is of a lozenge or a shield.

has his own coat of arms). If she has children, they will not be entitled to inherit the arms from her unless her husband, their father, is also armigerous and the children are their legitimate offspring: adopted children and those born out of wedlock may not inherit. If her husband is not armigerous, the children cannot inherit her arms¹²⁹.

It goes further, if she is unmarried, divorced or widowed there were heraldic devices placed on her arms to signal her status in a way that no man is required to display on his arms – her “availability” must be signalled to potential suitors¹³⁰. Once again, a woman’s status and rights are contingent on her marital status and the standing of her husband... and this in the 21st century!

Further, a woman with her own coat of arms who also holds a public office which has its own coat of arms cannot impale her arms with that of her office, unlike a man.

Following receipt of a letter querying the treatment of women in the granting of arms, the then Garter, Principal King of Arms - whose advice to the Monarch is ministerial in nature, setting out his various responses to the queries made - stated, as recently as 31 January 2019, “What is universal is a wish by many to preserve, cherish and understand [the archaic rules relating to women’s rights in the grant of arms]. (The College avers that women do not complain....)¹³¹”

This “universal” ‘wish’ is certainly not universal in the usual meaning of the term, which would mean there were no objections to it at all. Even Garter realises that when he adds the limitation of “many”. The author, whilst having sympathy with the fascination of delving into the historical technicalities and the reasons why, would suggest replacing his word “many” with “a few scholars of the arcane”. Many people object to it. It is suggested that women would complain, despite the College’s comments, referred to above, that they never do, if they only knew about the discrimination being meted out to them¹³². They certainly, from this author’s personal knowledge, grumble to each other about it. The College is, of course,

¹²⁹ There are a number of exceptions, eg a grant to the wife of a Lord Mayor (Sir Andrew Jude, Lord Mayor 1550-51) see further below

¹³⁰ This is (fortunately but only recently) no longer obligatory

¹³¹ See *Sunday Times* 30 April 2023.

¹³² The author discussed this, amongst others, with one of the women masters whose company displays their masters’ coats of arms. She, the master concerned, did not understand (the College does not tell women who do not ask that their grant is discriminatory when compared to a man’s) that her grant was discriminatory until she discovered *Equality of Arms*. Her livery has, however, done her proud in the way her arms are displayed in the window made available to her.

governed by Royal Prerogative rather than the normal route of legislation and searches in legislation in an attempt to see whether discrimination laws extend to the College of Arms have produced no obviously helpful result, though there are those who believe the discrimination falls within the Equality Act 2010 but nothing has as yet been proved¹³³. There have been recent changes made to accommodate same sex marriages: this was, it seems, as a result of pressure caused by legislation. There are those who think change is slowly coming, but how slow is slow? Sadly, as yet, there are no changes for women as such who, statistics tell us, comprise 51 per cent of the population. It is understood that heraldic law is outside the remit of Parliament since the authority to grant arms is in the personal remit of the Monarch and delegated to the Earl Marshal – were it not for that it would doubtless have been covered by the Equality Act. Other heraldic authorities have better ways of dealing with women's coats of arms, and readers should note that the rules are different in Scotland.

In any event it is considered that the College's current stance is incorrect in historical terms since it is believed that one of the first known (from such records as remain) women to be granted arms in her own right, was one Mary Mathew in 1558. Mary was the wife of late Lord Mayor of London Sir Alan Jude. She was granted permission for her own arms, and for those arms to be inherited by her children. An article about her appeared in *The Heraldry Gazette*¹³⁴. Further, the arms were not subjugated to her husband's by being impaled with his. In addition, her arms were on a shield and the source book mentions grants to other women in their own right¹³⁵. Today, whilst it is theoretically possible for the College to grant arms to women which are inheritable by her children, it apparently requires a Royal Licence which significantly increases the costs to the woman concerned.

¹³³ The Equality Act 2010 essentially deals with more general areas, such as employment, transport, education, housing and local authority works, matters affecting the vast majority of the population, as opposed to a very minor proportion. It does not, alas, apply for two main reasons in the view of the author as, whilst it is aimed at public bodies which it is arguable the College of Arms is, not only is the College not included in the list of public bodies and authorities in Schedule 19 but also, and more importantly, because the College acts on Royal Prerogative.

¹³⁴ The journal of the Heraldry Society April 2024

¹³⁵ *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* pp 572-579, A C Fox-Davies 1909 available on Wikisource.

That said, there is also evidence of a slightly earlier grant (dated 1556) for one Jone Kyrkby. See *Coat of Arms* Autumn 1976¹³⁶ where the author Colin Forrester cites an entry relating to her in the *Harleian Manuscripts*¹³⁷

It's extraordinary¹³⁸. We have women in all walks of life throughout the country. Many of them represent the country abroad. Many are also in senior posts in the Armed Forces. We have had women Prime Ministers and a woman President of the Supreme Court. We have appointed many women to the House of Lords. But each one of their grant of arms and the rights of inheritance of those arms, is dependent on whether she is a "chattel" wife, and, totally inappropriately, at least until as late as 2014, her arms compulsorily indicated her marital status.¹³⁹

Conclusions: The Present Position of Women in the Livery

First, and most importantly, it is understood that all companies now accept women on equal terms with men and that all companies have at least one woman member.

Second, by the close of 2024, there have been 271 appointments of 250 different women as Master of their livery and several more have held other positions of eminence in the City such as being Masters of Guilds, President of the City Livery Club and of the City Freemen's Guild. Many companies have had several women masters, only 14 (out of now (February 2025) 113) have had none. Some were frustrated by the pandemic (such as the Vintners and the Tin Plate Workers alias Wire Workers¹⁴⁰ which had both planned to have their first woman Master in July 2020 which perforce became 2021 due to extending the office of their 2019-20 Master by a further twelve months).

Third, further questioning of those fourteen companies which have not yet had a woman master indicates that they will reduce to thirteen by the end 2025, and to three possibly two by

¹³⁶ "The independent rights of married women in the Law of Arms" Colin D L Forrester, *Coat of Arms* Vol 69 pp 70-76. In the article he refers to the *Harleian Manuscripts* index 1116, folio 46 where it mentions the grant to Jone Kyrby and states that Clarenceux King of Arms has "*devysed geven and graunted to the said lady Jone a lozenge wt Armes in mann(er) as hereafter followeth (the blazon follows) to have and to hold to her and to her issu*" thus clearly indicating that her issue (children) would be able to inherit it.

¹³⁷ The *Harleian Manuscripts* are produced by the Harleian Society which is known for its quality and scholarship, especially with regard to Heraldic Visitations.

¹³⁸ Especially as the leading historian Fox-Davies found the whole matter of the inheritance of female arms to be an unresolved mess. A C Fox-Davies, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* op cit pp. 572-579.

¹³⁹ See Appendix III which shows the complexities relating to women according to the current (2023) view of the College of Arms as compared with men.

¹⁴⁰ 2020 was a celebratory year for the TPWW being 350 years from their Royal Charter.

the end 2033 (the Golden Jubilee of the first woman Master). Two of the final three essentially do not want to be pressurised into giving a timeframe in case, presumably, things don't work out as hoped, so it could well be fewer.

There are now also more women Aldermen and Common Councilmen. And the number of women sheriffs is slowly increasing – from the first in 1981 to the ninth in 2023 of which we have had seven between 2010 and 2023, sadly though still only two lady Lord Mayors in 1983 and 2013 however Dame Sue Langley has just been elected Lady Mayor (29 September 2025) for 2025-2026. Both City and Livery are actively supporting and encouraging women as well as men and women from ethnic minorities from which sector there have been several Masters¹⁴¹ and civic appointments¹⁴². No-one now “bats an eyelid” over the idea of having two, or more, women masters in a row¹⁴³. It is clear¹⁴⁴ that, across the Livery, companies are very positive towards women and ethnic minorities and keen to find ways of encouraging them first to join and then to become seriously involved¹⁴⁵.

Fourth, City Consorts is now a very important part of the livery movement, and it is hoped that the informal likely pre-Master year groups (and also pre-consort year groups) will be encouraged to continue in order to supplement and support and expand what City Consorts has so far achieved and to enable those in line for high office in their livery have the same opportunities for discussion and exchange of information as their consorts do via City Consorts as expanded by their own year consort groups.

¹⁴¹ Maria Chanmugan (Master Glass Seller 2022-23) and the author have attempted to produce an ethnic minority list – it's easy if the name is not a traditional what one might call European name but otherwise one needs photographs. We have so far (December 2023) logged 14 and 2 each from the Guild of Young Freemen and City Livery Club also 2 from the Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London in North America. We even found a (male) Lord Mayor from 1772 who was also Sheriff in 1769. But there could of course be more. See Appendix VII.

¹⁴² As common councilmen and aldermen/women.

¹⁴³ As one Past Master said to his Court some years ago when replying to an outburst at his proposing that the succession should have two women in successive years, “We've just had [let's say 650] men in a row, and no-one complained about that.” He reported that there was no further discussion, his proposal being accepted *nem con*. Observing from outside, they were two excellent Masters. The Plumbers had hoped to start a series of 3 women masters in a row in 2025 but sadly the third has had to pull out due to family sickness. There is a rumour that one of the Great 12 will now be the first of the old companies to achieve three in a row.

¹⁴⁴ Such as the Clothworkers, a company which is striving to have the sex ratio 50:50. The Basketmakers have nearly 40% women members. The Fan Makers livery is rapidly acquiring more women members. The Gardeners have over 40% of women members.

¹⁴⁵ Apart from the hard encouragement by Gavyn Arthur (Lord Mayor 2002-2003) and his civic team to persuade the remaining livery companies to open themselves to women (*op.cit.*) it is fair to say that there has never been any concerted attempt to make a cross-livery plan to encourage livers to change their stance with regard to women earlier -- this contrasts with attempts at various times to have plans to encourage the young to join, see eg, *The Livery 2000 Initiative*, which involved sixteen livery companies.

Finally, it should be recognised that, as the Lady Masters Association is City of London based, its membership was originally limited to those who have held high office in the Civic City, in Liveries, ancient and modern Companies without Livery¹⁴⁶, City Guilds, and in the City Livery Company – it did not, oddly, include the Foreman of the Guildable Manor of Southwark which has been owned by the City since 1327¹⁴⁷. There have been many discussions on-going from before the Association started about how far membership should be extended to women leading other trade guilds or liveries.¹⁴⁸ However, the value of opening access to women holding similar positions outside London has been slowly become more widely acknowledged. This has been in line with an evident willingness of recent Lord Mayors to have a more inclusive and less “square-mile-limited” approach. As a result of members’ replies to an LMA questionnaire and (several) AGM discussions, the decision has finally been taken to increase gradually the breadth of the Association’s membership, based on the Livery Database circulation list of the London Livery Companies, companies without livery and City Guilds, together with City Liveries/Guilds outside London with close links. Five such Masters or Past Masters from bodies on that database have now been welcomed into membership of the LMA including the York Merchant Adventurers, the Livery Company of Wales and the Hallamshire Cutlers.

Erica Stary^{149 150}

June 2025

¹⁴⁶ There are two ancient companies which do not have livery status – the Parish Clerks and the Watermen and Lightermen, both of which have had women masters. Otherwise, a Company without Livery is a Guild, which has reached a stage in its processes where it is acknowledged that it has met certain minimum criteria laid down by the Aldermanic Court and will now proceed to work towards meeting the third stage minimum criteria needed to be awarded the status of livery company. There are requirements relating to working capital, charity funds, membership and numbers of members free of the City. Members of a Company without Livery are entitled to apply for City Freedom.

¹⁴⁷ It was acquired in part to stop villains escaping justice by running over London Bridge

¹⁴⁸ Many Past Masters Associations have members from other parts of the country – eg Coronation Masters, Figaro Masters and Carolean Masters have all had/have a York Merchant Adventurer Governor member.

¹⁴⁹ LLM, CTA (Fellow), ATT (Fellow), TEP, solicitor. PM Tax Adviser, PM Plumber and PM Tin Plate Worker alias Wire Worker, Past Chairman Lady Masters Association, Mother Company City Solicitors, Ambassador for Goldsmiths’ Fair. Past President Association of Taxation Technicians, and more. For those who are interested, the Lord Chancellor’s Department (as it then was) told her (orally) back in the early 1990s not to “fraternise” with other solicitors as it would jeopardise her further appointment on the Bench (she was at the time a deputy district judge and an assistant recorder). It is to be hoped that that apparently derogatory stance no longer applies. Her interest in the Livery was piqued when she was the Mistress Barber in the mid 1980s but found she could not join because she was not a man.

¹⁵⁰ With many thanks to Lis Hobday, Adèle Thorpe, Venetia Howes, Mei Sim Lai, Murray Craig (the then Clerk to the Chamberlain)’s Court, Elizabeth Scudder (Principal Archivist (Access) London Metropolitan Archives), Cindy Peck (Hon Archivist, Gardeners Company), Richard Cole-Mackintosh (Clerk to the Shipwrights), Von Spofforth (founder of City Consorts), Paul Jagger and many others too numerous to mention, for their unstinted assistance. Notwithstanding their help, errors, if any, are all my own.

APPENDIX I

The Lady Masters Association, Formation History

The background

The first Lady Master, Sylvia Tutt¹⁵¹, was appointed in 1983. Over the next thirty years, there were some seventy-nine appointments of women by various companies, some women, most notably HRH The Princess Royal, having been appointed more than once, there were seventy-two women who had been accorded that honour. In the early years, there were often only one, two or no women appointed. But by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, it was clear that the numbers each year were slowly rising.

Lady Masters Network

A group of women, who were mainly those who served together as Masters during 2009 and 2010, started meeting together for coffees and the like to share experiences. This small initial group of around eight people was joined rapidly by a few others from earlier years and subsequently by those made Masters in later years. They held a lunch at the Lansdowne Club on 14 January 2011 – 11 people attended for which Helen Auty¹⁵² made the arrangements. As numbers grew, the group was called by its members *The Lady Masters*.

In her year as Aldermanic Sheriff, Fiona Woolf invited a dozen Lady Masters, the President of the City Livery Club, their consorts and others to join her for dinner at the Old Bailey¹⁵³ on 8 September 2011 to discuss the setting up of a more formal group. Those attending also included Sylvia Tutt (*supra*) and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence¹⁵⁴. The issue of who was qualified for membership of such a group other than Masters, Prime Wardens and Upper Bailiffs and senior Civic Officers was (and continues to be) much discussed. It was also suggested that there might be an annual “Sylvia Tutt” luncheon in Sylvia’s honour.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Sylvia also became Master Scrivener in 2007 and President of the City Livery Club in 2001

¹⁵² PM Pattenmaker

¹⁵³ Part of the Sheriffs’ function is to look after the Old Bailey judges, and for that purpose they are required to live in a small flat (one each) in the building during their year of office.

¹⁵⁴ Sir Tim, the husband of HRH The Princess Royal, was then Master Coachmaker.

¹⁵⁵ This appears not to have occurred, in the event.

Out of the meeting at the Old Bailey, the Lady Masters Network was formed. Adèle Thorpe¹⁵⁶ had previously researched and created a database of females who had served as Master, which Elisabeth Hobday¹⁵⁷ volunteered to maintain and to email those in the group who had said they wanted to hear about events. Lis also acted as secretary, treasurer and co-ordinator. She invited new female Masters to join. In addition, she designed, organised and ordered badges (pink) for all who joined. Members made suggestions of where to meet. The Network continued to grow and some members took part (*qua* Network members) in the 2013 Lord Mayor's Show¹⁵⁸.

The float in the Lord Mayor's Show in November 2013 was organised by member Mei Sim Lai¹⁵⁹ via the Women in the Livery section of the City Livery Club. Several fascinating events were organised from January to September to raise funds for it, including a Malaysian dinner with Jimmy Choo¹⁶⁰, a cybersecurity talk and an Islamic finance event. Fiona Woolf, whose show it was, was thrilled, and insisted it had pride of place as float no 3 (the first float after the opening salvos) and as the first-ever all female float in the Show. (The second all women's float – which was the first organised by the Lady Masters Association - was in 2018 to celebrate 100 years of the vote. The LMA chairman was interviewed by the BBC outside the Mansion House as part of its live coverage^{161 162}.) Both were very exciting days. For 2025, the amazing year when we have elected our third female LM, it is planned to have 7 dedicated women floats (again organised by the indefatigable Mei Sim Lai) with at least 697 women (Dame Sue Langley being the 697th mayor). She also has felt strong enough to be able not only to describe herself as an alderwoman but also as Lady Mayor¹⁶³. In addition, for the first time, it is understood, she has been building for the last eighteen months a strong relationship with those who will be master etc at some stage within her year. She asked the author of this paper to build a database for her and in turn by the time of her election there were well over 120 members of the WhatsApp group, including masters from other guilds around the country

¹⁵⁶ PM Chartered Secretary and Administrator, PP City Livery Club.

¹⁵⁷ PM Loriner.

¹⁵⁸ Many others would have been in their company's float or, eg the Modern Companies float.

¹⁵⁹ OBE, DL. PM World Trader and PP City Livery Club. Mei Sim Lai also runs the Women in the Livery section of the City Livery Club

¹⁶⁰ He of the shoes.

¹⁶¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzd5db-sgeM>

¹⁶² Due to the timing of the interview, she (the author of this paper) then had to run with the flag she was carrying through several other floats, which had passed through, to catch up with the LMA float! Not an easy task.

¹⁶³ She equates this what has already happened in the judiciary – eg Lady Justices for women, Lord Justices for men.

as well as the Master of the Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America¹⁶⁴

Lady Masters Association

Now that they had begun to get to know other women (Past) Masters from outside their own years in office, the women wanted to continue the networking and the friendships. They were encouraged to become more formally associated by Fiona Adler¹⁶⁵. At a reception in the Old Bailey hosted by her when she was Sheriff in 2014 for members of the Lady Masters Network, she suggested that a committee should be created to investigate how the progression of the association should develop.

Many people volunteered to help steer this. The initial core group settled on was six, as more were thought to make it unwieldy, and, at the first meeting, Venetia Howes¹⁶⁶ was elected Chairman. After a few meetings, it was agreed to propose the creation of a more formal organisation with its own bank account, constitution etc. The papers for this were prepared and all members of the old group and other new prospects were invited to a meeting in April 2015. At this meeting, the formal Lady Masters Association was born with Adèle elected the first Chairman, Venetia, and Valerie Boakes¹⁶⁷ as Vice-Chairmen, Maureen Marden¹⁶⁸ the Treasurer, Pamela Goldberg¹⁶⁹ as Membership Secretary and Sandra Worsdall as Secretary. The Memorandum and Articles¹⁷⁰, which had been proposed by the working group, were also adopted¹⁷¹.

In the first year, Adèle invited HRH The Princess Royal to become Patron and she confirmed her acceptance on 13 March 2015 (and has since renewed her patronage¹⁷²). The Association created its own email addresses and website¹⁷³. Through Venetia and Valerie, a new logo was designed and adopted in late 2015 to be used on everything and new badges were ordered,

¹⁶⁴ Currently Helen Field, a former member of the Pageantmasters team.

¹⁶⁵ A member of the informal group as a PM Tobacco Pipe Maker and Tobacco Blender and as a Sheriff.

¹⁶⁶ PM Marketor.

¹⁶⁷ PP City Livery Club also Liveryman of the Marketors.

¹⁶⁸ PM Environmental Cleaner, twice.

¹⁶⁹ PM Needle-maker.

¹⁷⁰ PM Chartered Secretary and Administrator.

¹⁷¹ There have since been minor changes to these. The current version is available for view on www.ladymasters.org.uk

¹⁷² Royal patronages are under regular review.

¹⁷³ www.ladymasters.org.uk

replacing the original pink badges, which Lis Hobday had organised earlier. However, it was suggested that existing members could, if they wished, stay with the original badges¹⁷⁴.

The Association was admitted to the Association of Past Masters Associations with LMA representatives attending the annual meeting for the first time in March 2016. Details of the organisation were included for the first time in the Blue Book 2015¹⁷⁵ (sadly now discontinued due to the complexities arising post GDPR) and later in the White Book¹⁷⁶. The Chairman ensured that any new female master was congratulated in her first month of office¹⁷⁷ and was invited to join, resulting in almost every one so doing. A quarterly newsletter was issued telling of future events organised by the group and news of members.

The Association made a presentation to its first member to become Sheriff since formalising the Association (Christine Rigden¹⁷⁸) on 24 November 2015. (When member Liz Green¹⁷⁹ became Sheriff, the Association made a donation to her shrieval badge appeal, likewise to Alison Gowman's shrieval badge appeal. Also in 2023 to Dame Sue Langley's shrieval badge appeal.

Although there had been seated dinners for example in Guildhall after the first meeting to create the Association in April 2015, the first formal black tie event was in the House of Lords in February 2016 through the kind offices of member Baroness Garden of Frognal¹⁸⁰. Adèle presented a formal Chairman's badge to the group and populated the website in 2016.

The first event for Wardens was held in October 2015 answering the question "Things I wish I'd known before I became Master"¹⁸¹. This event has been held at regular intervals and proved very popular.

¹⁷⁴ The author has kept her pink version. There seemed little reason to have an updated version as the main objective was people should be able to recognise the name of the individual.

¹⁷⁵ *The City of London Directory & Livery Companies Guide*, which was published annually from 1984 to 2018.

¹⁷⁶ *The City of London White Book* is edited by Jonathan Grosvenor, clerk to the Chartered Accountants livery, it provides a host of useful information about the Civic City and the Livery and is updated annually.

¹⁷⁷ Sadly, not always possible where her email address is not known to the LMA. Clerks, it has been found, do not necessarily always pass on such emails or correspondence – they are frankly too busy. The author found that the organisers (the Glasgow Trades House) of the Masters weekend in 2023 had enormous difficulty communicating with their prospective invitees and asked her for help. She found that everyone she contacted replied saying, in effect, that her communication was the first one they had received.

¹⁷⁸ PM Constructor and PM Mason.

¹⁷⁹ PM Framework Knitter.

¹⁸⁰ PM World Trader.

¹⁸¹ This session has been repeated regularly. Wardens find it very helpful to attend particularly whilst they are a junior warden of their company. Sadly, the July 2020 meeting had to be cancelled and was replaced by a Zoom Q&A session in February 2021. The latest session was held at Guildhall in May 2025.

Erica Stary¹⁸² took over as Chairman in the AGM in April 2017, Ann Buxton¹⁸³ in 2019 and Pam Taylor¹⁸⁴ in 2022. After Pam, Georgie Gough¹⁸⁵ took over in 2024.

Dame Fiona Woolf was appointed Master Plumber in October 2018 and coincidentally became the 150th female Livery Master appointment¹⁸⁶. In 2019 the 100th member joined the association. There are currently (early January 2024) upwards of 150 members with more in the pipeline.

A 40th anniversary celebration of Sylvia Tutt's appointment took place at Trinity House in the Autumn of 2023. The guest of honour was Dame Fiona Woolf who, amongst other things, reminded us that women at work were presumed to be doing what were perceived as "womanly things"¹⁸⁷, other guests included Baroness Hale¹⁸⁸ (who is a liveryman of the Fruiterers and PM of the Richmond Fellmongers).

¹⁸² PM Tax Adviser 2005, PM Plumber 2015, and PM Tin Plate Worker alias Wire Worker 2022.

¹⁸³ PM Pewterer.

¹⁸⁴ PM Educator

¹⁸⁵ PM Art Scholar

¹⁸⁶ It had been thought that Fiona Morrison (Actuary) was the 150th individual woman to be appointed a Master of a livery company, but close inspection of the records kept by two of us indicated that we had both made errors (different) which resulted in both being out by 2. The 150th individual was actually Valerie Owen le Vaillant OBE (Chartered Architect) with Fiona Morrison being no 148.

¹⁸⁷ Such as, for a lawyer, children's and women's problems. Certainly not the type of work she actually did which included advising many governments around the world on restructuring and market implementations of electricity sectors. The author's experience was not much different, as she recalls being asked, in 1985, by a well-known firm of City lawyers if she had her husband's permission to go out to work.

¹⁸⁸ First woman President of the Supreme Court. She also founded the Women Judges Association (which is also open to male judges and there were such members when the author was a member.) The WJA links up with similar from around the world.

APPENDIX II

Set out below are the figures, extrapolated from the contemporaneous *Women in the Livery* research paper, showing how the livery gradually extended full rights to women.

The 1970 figures exclude those companies which stopped having women members in the late Georgian period and throughout the Victorian era. Generally, this can be said to have occurred at some time during the period 1835 to 1910. The later periods gradually add companies back as they take the decision to have women liverymen.

Readers need to know that there were no new livery companies from 1848 to the 1920s. Pre 1900 companies are known as ancient livery companies and post 1920 as modern livery companies. There are 77 extant ancient livery companies and, as at Summer 2025, 36 modern livery companies, obtaining livery between the mid 1920s to 2025. There are other potential livery companies known as guilds or companies without livery and two ancient companies which do not intend to apply for livery (the Parish Clerks, and the Watermen and Lightermen).

All the modern companies save 3 were, at least theoretically, open to women from the outset. Theoretically, because, in many cases, no woman applied to join for several years, so that the stance of the company concerned to the concept of having a woman member was not tested.

Taking the position at 10 yearly intervals to 2020 and then 2025 from a date when there were reasonable figures to consider, and looking also at the mid 80s to see the impact of having a woman Lord Mayor, this is how the livery opened up to women. The significant increase during the 2000s was in part due to the Mayoral team of the late Sir Gavyn Arthur which made it clear that a livery company which did not accept women equally could not expect a Mayoral or Shrieval visit during his mayoralty.

	Old company numbers	Open to women equally†	New company numbers	Open to women equally	Total companies	Total open	Percentage
By 1970	77	6	7	4	84	10	11.90
By 1980	77	15	15	12	92	27	29.34
By 1985	77	25	19	18	96	43	44.79
By 1990	77	32	22	21	99	53	53.53
By 2000	77	46	25	25	102	67	69.60
By 2010	77	68	31	31	108	99	91.67
By end 2020**	77	77	33	33	110	110	100
By end 2025	77	77*	36	36	113‡	113	100

*Four companies were unable to say when they began to accept women on equal terms, but all four have had a woman Master so the earlier figures are distorted by not knowing when each of the four extended equal rights to women.

** All guilds, companies without livery and the two non-livery ancient worshipful companies (the Parish Clerks, and the Watermen and Lightermen) accept women on equal terms with men. They have all had women Masters.

† Some companies initially had limits on women members. They have now all been removed. The figures do not indicate those imposing initial limits as the limits were not reached during the period concerned.

‡ Company no 111 (the Nurses) did not obtain livery status till 2023, the Entrepreneurs (112) in 2024 and the Communicators (113) in 2025.

It is understood that all companies have at least one woman member who may not necessarily be a liveryman.

APPENDIX III

Chart showing differences between Men and Women as to their current rights relating to Grants of Arms according to the College of Heraldry [Grant of Arms Chart]

Also the Shields displayed at the Old Bailey for Aldermen Hanley and Masojada 2023

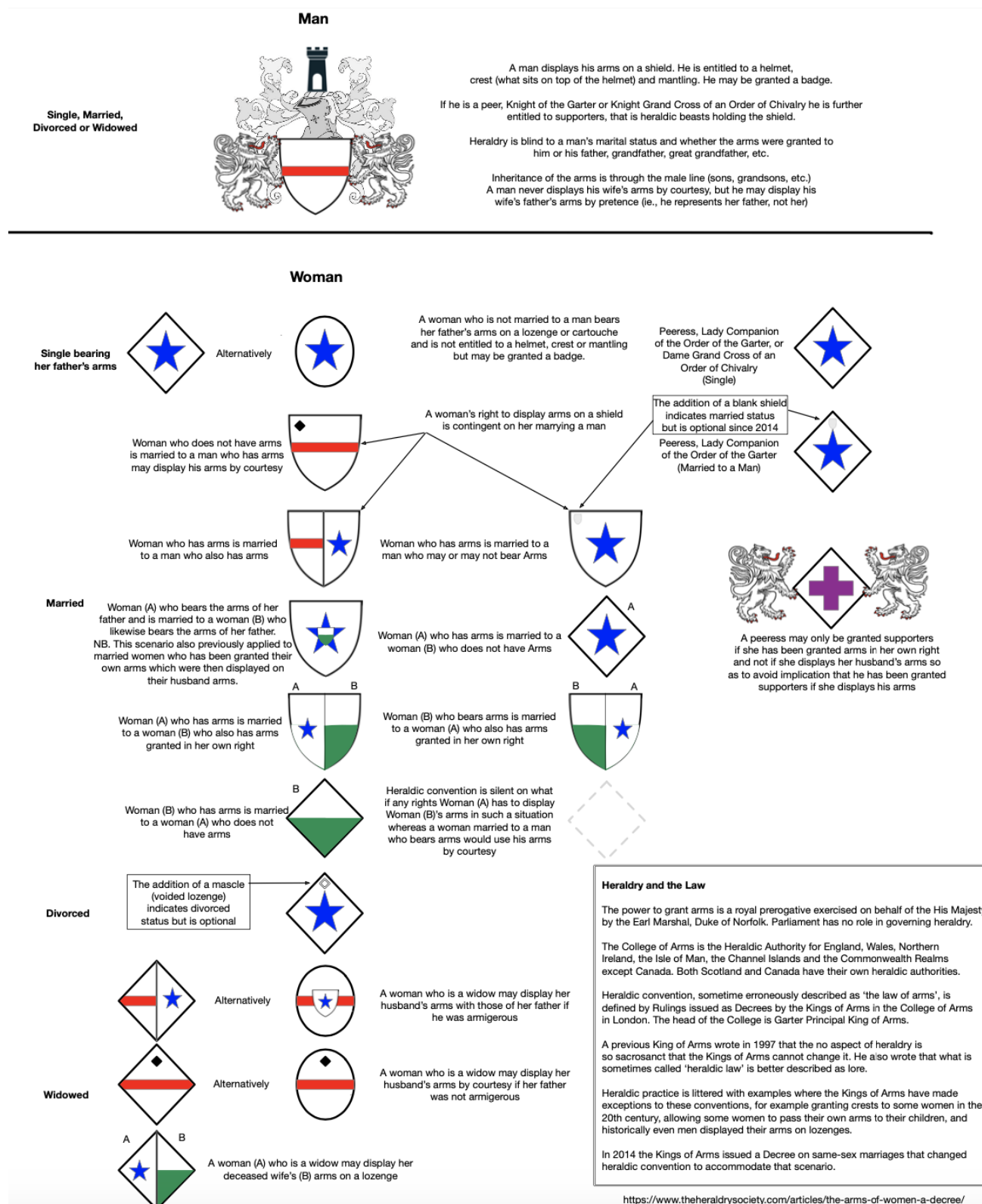




Photo courtesy Paul Jagger

APPENDIX IV
LIVERY COMPANIES, ETC.
Summary of relevant dates

This spreadsheet sets out in simple terms

- 1 The precedence number of the company
- 2 The name of the company
- 3 The year livery is first known to have been given to women/women with the same rights as men in the livery – if stated to be before 1919, then in legal terms strictly 1919 following the Sex Discrimination Act passed that year
- 4 The relevant dates relating to the company - creation, grant of livery, the initial Royal Charter (some have had several)
- 5 The year the first woman was made master and the number of women masters to end of 2023. cv indicates covid extension or, if relevant, the expected/hoped-for year (*italicised*) of the first woman master
- 6 Whether the company has or has had one or more women clerks
- 7 Any other information thought by the creator of the spreadsheet to be of interest to the reader

 Any shaded cell indicates that the information is not currently available.

The spreadsheet is designed to go alongside a research paper on women in the livery which is to be made available contemporaneously

Please note that not all companies mentioned are livery companies, some are ancient companies without livery, some are modern companies which are in process of becoming a livery company, others are guilds at the outset of that process

Please note also that the term Master includes the equivalent position in those companies which call their chairman Prime Warden or Upper Bailiff

Women in the Livery and in High Civic Office in the City: Appendices

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
91	Actuaries	from inception	1979	2016/3 cv	y	One of the earliest women would s have been Monica Allanach who became a fellow of the Institute in 1951 and another Pat Merriman
81	Air Pilots	from inception	1929/L1956/ RC2014	2014/1		The first female member was Amy Johnson elected for 5 years as an honorary member. The first full member was the wonderful Miss Winifred Spooner who was elected on 15 September 1930. Her pilot licence was no 8137 from the Aeroplane Club in 1927 and she was the 16th woman to obtain such a licence. She also received an Aviator's Certificate from the USA dated 21 August 1931, and signed by Orville Wright. The then Duchess of Bedford was elected an Hon Warden on 4 December 1930
58	Apothecaries	1947	1617	2002/2		Records show that widows and daughters were able to be apothecaries by virtue of having been deemed to have done an apprenticeship, such as the Widow Wyncke, whose husband died in 1628, and who also had apprentices. This petered out in Victorian times as apothecary shops became pharmacies. The Company voted to admit women freemen in 1949. By the 1980s women members were about 6% of the membership and in the 2020s are over 20%. The Company received its livery in 1630. See also note to the Grocers above; People such as Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson were not members, they "merely" took the Apothecaries exams. The Apothecaries emerged from the Grocers as they became more specialised; See <i>History of the Society of Apothecaries</i> Penelope Hunting. Also for wider interest www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/womens-business-17th-century-female-pharmacists . Incidentally, Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson was a licentiate. Two more women masters are expected in the near future
93	Arbitrators	from inception	L1981 / RC2012	2001/4 cv	y	
22	Armourers & Brasiers	June 2004	1322/RC1453	2021/1		The first charter was granted to brothers and sisters of the craft, widows also were admitted, and daughters by patrimony. The A+B have a huge freeman base. Women are known to have been able to become free in modern times from the 1980s. But it can then take a long time for a freeman to obtain the livery, due to the limited livery number (150) so it took many (26) years after opening the company to women on equal terms before the first freewoman "made it" to the livery. Having said that, their first female Master was appointed in 2021
110	Art Scholars	from inception	2005/L2014/ RC2019	2019/1	y	
19	Bakers	2006	1155	2026	y	The Bakers comment that there have always been women running bakery businesses, certainly from the 19th C and probably earlier. One item they sent to me from their records discloses that one "Elizabeth Baker {address} was admitted to the Freedom of the Company by Patrimony by virtue of her Father's Copy and on

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
						the Testimony of John Callendar Citizen and Baker and was sworn and paid [ie the entry fine] [£]1.5[s].” [£1.25p in modern coinage]. The item below states she was “also admitted an Housekeeper [understood to be a Proprietor rather than the present day meaning of the word] and paid 12[s]...Extra fee out of Court 10 [s]
17	Barbers	2005	1308/RC1462	2022/1		The company is an amalgamation of two, dates are for the first in time. They were unified by statute in 1540. The surgeons broke away to form what is now the Royal College of Surgeons in 1745. From earliest times, they have had boy and girl apprentices, women have been admitted by patrimony and have had apprentices. Likewise widows. They were not clothed until 2005. Sidney Young's <i>Annals</i> of 1890 records 1 freewoman. "From the earliest times the custom has prevailed to admit women to the freedom, mostly by apprenticeship, but also by patrimony, and these freewomen bound their apprentices, both boys and girls, at the Hall; of course the ladies were not admitted to the livery, but otherwise they had the same privileges as freemen so far as the same were compatible with their sex..."
52	Basketmakers	1983	1569	2006/3	y/3	No women are recorded before 1711, there were 4 women during the 121 years to 1832. The next two were admitted as honorary freemen when their husbands were masters (1917 and 1925) after which in 1936 the Court ruled women were not eligible, save for Royals. After 1973 women were made eligible by patrimony, which was later extended to "patrimony" where their fathers had been members for over 25 years. They then linked with the Basketmakers Asociation who were mainly women and 4 were appointed in 1981. Shortly after that, they admitted their first woman to the Livery. The first woman court assistant was appointed in 1996. They now have many women members.
40	Blacksmiths	2004	1299/RC1571	2025	y	Historically, Blacksmithing has been a male activity although the original fraternity did incude wives (as well as farriers and loriners. The religious fraternities of the early days were abolished with the Reformation. Their hoped-for earlilier woman master did not materialise, in the event.
38	Bowyers	2020	1363	no date yet provided	y	The Bowyers had 9 women apprentices between 1685 and 1746. They also had widows who ran their husband's trade and took on apprentices.Their first modern woman liveryman has a deep interest in Agincourt and inter alia served as chairman of the trustees of the Agincourt 600 charity

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Brewers	several hundred years ago	1406/RC1438	2024		The Brewers had a number of women members in the early days - especially between 1418 and 1440 where it is recorded that about a third of the membership were women, single, widows and married. Research indicates that some people regarded brewing as women's work by the mid 1400s (this being an indirect consequence of the devastation caused by the Black Death introduced to the UK in 1348 - see eg <i>Ale Beer and Brewsters in England, Women's Work in a Changing World 1300-1600</i> (Judith M Bennett)). It is not possible to be a Brewer unless one is one in practice. A few were said to wear the livery, most did not. Interestingly, due to lack of potable water, many households round the world used a lot of beer, which tended to be produced by women. In Europe, brewing slowly became male-dominated. There is a fascinating article in <i>Wikipedia</i> on Women in Brewing. There is no record of women apprentice Brewers. The records of the then clerk shows that about a third of those paying quarterage between 1418-1440 were women (See CLC/L/BF/A/021/MS05440 at the Guildhall Library)
48	Broderers	2011	13th century/ RC1561	May-24		The Broderers had several women in the early days but none after 1756. Nothing in the Charter or Bylaws prevented women from joining. The company still has active broderers. The Royal Wardrobe used to have a full-time Broderer (see eg for the style and quality of workmanship the main decorations on the Bacton Altar Cloth (Elizabethan embroidery) displayed at Hampton Court after restoration in early 2020 (with financial support from the Tin Plate Workers alias Wire Workers and the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers) and in 2023 at the GSWD's anniversary exhibition in Guildhall.
88	Builders Merchants	from inception	1961/L1977/RC20 12	2014/3	y/3	There is nothing in the original Ordinances which forbids women members. The first was clothed in 1982
24	Butchers	1984	975/RC1605	2010/3		Their first woman liveryman (patrimony) was their second woman master, the first being HRH The Princess Royal
77	Carmen	1997	1517/RC1605/L18 48	1986/2		The trade (carters) did not naturally attract women although there have been a few prominent women in the business. The company now embraces other unrepresented transport services of railway and inland public transport services which are also not great bastions of female representatives but numbers are rising. The Carmen hold an annual cartmarking ceremony in Guildhall Yard, which is well worth attending.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	Carpenters	2004	1271/RC1477	2017/1		The Carpenters' Boke of Ordinances 1333 refers to both brothers and sisters though it is unlikely the sisters did carpentry rather other necessary work for the running of the business such as timber dealing. Increasingly they became more active in their own right. They were apprenticed, they became freemen, they ran the family business - Eleanor Coade (not a carpenter or member), eg, ran a successful business making ornamental stone which looked like Portland stone - the company's coat of arms in their Hall is in Coade stone (Carpenters' Broadsheet no 57). By the end of the 19thc women were increasingly joining, mainly by patrimony. The first women [Hon] Liveryman was Queen Juliana of the Netherlands in 2004 [Carpenters Hall is near the Dutch Church] and the first Hon Freewoman was Mary Woodgate Wharrie in 1917, a generous benefactor.
86	Chartered Accountants	from inception	1975/L1977/RC2012	1993/3		
98	Chartered Architects	from inception	1985/L1988/RC2019	1996/4 cv	y/1	
87	Chartered Secretaries	from inception	1977/L1978/RC2006	1983/6	y	The Company has the distinction of being the first livery to have a woman Master - Sylvia Tutt
85	Chartered Surveyors	from inception	1977	1999/4	y	
61	Clockmakers	from inception but in practice probably 1983	RC1631/ L1766	2002/3	2019 they also have a much treasured assistant clerk	The company has run for nearly four centuries according to its Charter and By-Laws of 1631 and 1632. The first female apprentice was apprenticed on Christmas Day 1660. The first freewoman was in 1692. Many girls have been apprenticed. Several wives had other trades. There have been a number of important women clockmakers, such as Mariane Viet one of whose elaborate trade cards is exhibited at the British Museum and a magnificent walnut longcase of hers is in a private collection in the USA. Officers must be or have been professional clockmakers (as widely defined). Many women clockmakers continued their trade during marriage [they would have needed their husband's support and consent.] Women freemen had apprentices. The Antiquarian Horological Society has full details of all female apprentices of the Company - see www.ahsoc.org/resources/women-and-horology/ The curator of the Clockmakers Museum (in the Science Museum) is also female. Finally the ADS and Horology project discovered a huge resource relating to women in many different aspects of horology. In addition, there is an interesting article on a milliner freesister in <i>Wikipedia</i> - Eleanor Mosley

Women in the Livery and in High Civic Office in the City: Appendices

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Clothworkers	1994	1155/RC1528	2017/1		To celebrate their first 14 Liverywomen the Company commissioned a portrait which now hangs in their library. The Clothworkers are trying to have 50:50 male female parity
72	Coachmakers	1977 the first actually being 1980	RC1677	2011/4		The consensus by 1977 was that anyone who met the criteria for joining should be welcomed, regardless of gender. Prior to that the honour of freedom appears to have been awarded as appropriate, eg to Baroness Burdett-Coutts to thank her for the work she had done for the Coachmakers; several wives of liverymen were also granted freedom on the deaths of their spouses.
113	Communicators	from inception	2000	2003/8		
99	Constructors	from inception	1976/L1990/RC2010	2009/3		
35	Cooks	2003	1170/RC1482	2021/1		The Cooks had a formal grade of freemaids which was open to daughters of freemen and liverymen who were entitled to patrimony. In 2003 all existing freemaids were offered livery, and the term for freedom for both sexes became freemen. There is some evidence of widows of liverymen being notionally treated as liverymen in order to carry on their husband's business in medieval and Tudor times. The records are sketchy.
36	Coopers	July 2000	1298/RC1501	2022/1		Following a decision in 1999 to allow women equal rights with men the first woman was clothed in 2000. Records indicate that women were free of the company in the middle ages and that the Charters refer to expressly or implicitly to both sexes. Many were widows, and thus enabled to carry on the family cooperage business, but it also entitled them to support out of the charitable funds should it be necessary. The earliest record of widow freesisters is 1487. The first woman liveryman joined as a freeman in 1991. Many women have been admitted as freemen since WW1. The membership split is currently (2020) 22%:78% f:m.
27	Cordwainers	2002	1272/RC1439	2023/1	y	Lady Freemen had been Members of the Company in the early days but they were mainly widows who had carried on their husbands' businesses, however they had not been invited to join the Livery. As fewer members of the Company followed the shoemakers' trade even fewer ladies became members of the Company. It was not until 1960 that freeborn daughters of liverymen were invited to apply for the Freedom of the Company, which many did, thus also conferring the right of Freedom on their freeborn children in turn.

Women in the Livery and in High Civic Office in the City: Appendices

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	Curriers	2002	1272/RC1605	2019/1 cv		The first woman clothed was Mary McNeil who became the first woman Master in 2019. In earlier times, the Curriers admitted daughters by patrimony. After a gap, they began to admit women freemen in the 1960s, usually Past Masters' wives.
18	Cutlers	2011	1344/RC 1416	2020 /1 cv		Their first liverywoman is their first woman Master. Freedom was opened in 2006. In the past, they had a few women freemen, mainly widows running the family business.
69	Distillers	1997	RC1638 L1672	2027		The company was founded as a result of pressure by a distinguished emigré Huguenot medic, Sir Theodore de Mayerne. Many women distilled with licences to trade. None of them was a freesister as such of the Company
3	Drapers	2002	1364	2012/1		The Drapers have always had female Freemen (the title has always been Brethren and Sisters) with women being admitted to the Freedom and taking apprentices (though often as not this was because their husband had died and it was the husband who had been the Draper). Women were just not Called to the Livery until 2002.
13	Dyers	2019	1471			There were women, mainly widows, in the Dyers in earlier times and there is nothing in their regulations which prevents this. Some widows took apprentices and there is evidence of this from the mid 1700s; also of membership by patrimony. As they look, like all other companies, to have the best person for Master, they state there is no timescale or sex restriction.
109	Educators	from inception	2001/L2014/RC2017	2002/7	y	150 members were admitted, about half women, when livery was granted in 2014.
94	Engineers	From inception, the first being in 1988	L1983/RC2004	2016/2	y	<p>Beryl Platt worked in the aircraft industry during and after WW2, but gave up work when her children were born. She became involved in local politics and was became a County Councillor with Essex County Council. From there she was appointed by Margaret Thatcher to head the Equal Opportunities Commission, and from there appointed by Sir Denis Rooke (our second Master) to the Board of British Gas and then invited to join the Engineers Company and various other posts. At least two of the Engineer women members are Dames and one of those has the OM.</p> <p>https://guildhallhistoricalassociation.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/6-the-silk-industry.pdf</p> <p>See also for potted biographies of women members</p> <p>http://www.engineerscompany.org.uk/2020/06/23/our-women-engineers/</p>
112	Entrepreneurs	from inception	2014	2018/2		

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97	Environmental Cleaners	from inception	1972/L1986	1986/5	y	<p>Women are highly influential right across every aspect of our diverse industry. We established an annual 'Ladies Banquet' to remind all our members and their guests that, in our earlier days as a Livery, we may have had less women as members than men, but our industry is and remains heavily dependent upon them. We have also recently introduced a new non-Freemen membership category of "Pathway" to provide a route for any individual new into the industry or building their career to engage with senior industry leaders within our industry and have one of our members become their mentor.</p> <p>Also, and this final point probably better confirms that we have always been an equal opportunities membership organisation. Our first 'Master' as a City Livery company was a woman, and currently we have had 4 women as Master, one twice! We have 6 women Court Assistants out of 20, with 2 of them on the progression list. There are at least 6 other women members who would like to progress to the Court as and when vacancies emerge, and when fits with their business and personal circumstances.</p> <p>Importantly, as a meritocratic and inclusive membership organisation, we have never had to operate a positive discrimination policy to change the gender or other profile our Company wherever within our Company because we encourage and support our members full engagement in our all activities.</p>

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76	Fan Makers	2005	Guild earlier. RC1709/ L1809	2030	Y	<p>Fan makers moved to England from France with the Huguenots in C17th and fans became fashionable leading to a Charter in 1709. Fans were mostly made by females and at the height in C18th some 1,000 were employed in London. Liverymen though were male like most organisations. In the early days membership was low, but by 1747 there were well over 800 members. At the peak about 20 apprentices were qualifying each year. In the 1700s many thousands of fans were imported from Canton by the East India Company. The period from 1750-1800 was the highpoint of fans being fashionable. Despite the company's best efforts, people preferred French fans so that at the 1851 Great Exhibition there were no English fans. Membership dwindled to 31 by 1877. Helene Alexander was made an Hon Liveryman after she had created the Fan Museum in Greenwich in 2006. The company has had several Honorary Liverywomen Royals in the last century, including today, HRH Duchess of Gloucester. In the last 25 years livery membership proper has been opened to females and currently (2020) there is about 27% female livery membership. The intake is around 50:50 meaning the female element grows year on year in ratio to the male element, especially as all the 'leavers' tend to be older men. That trajectory suggests an eventual 50:50 ratio. Ignoring past masters the Court make-up is now reflected in the same way. They hope to have their first female master by 2030; and after that the assumption is that the M/F ratio would follow as one female every 4 years or so, but as not everyone wants to be a Master there are no guarantees!</p>

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80	Farmers	1976(H)/ 79	1946/L1952/ RC 1955	1993/5	y	The right of women to join was raised in 1948 following an application from a woman. At that time the Court accepted a recommendation that the company's membership should be limited to men. After a further application in 1971, the Clerk sought advice from the Clerk to the Chamberlain's court, who advised that women had always been entitled to freedom of the City (except during marriage until 1923). In 1972 the Court took the decision to bar women save possibly by honorary appointment but noted that the decision might have to be reviewed. HRH The Princess Royal was made Honorary Liveryman in 1976. In 1977 the Court decided <i>nem con</i> to accept women on the same terms as men. The first non-royal women freemen were admitted at the September 1978 court - Ann Wheatley Hubbard (AWH), Lady Robson of Kiddington and Elizabeth Creak. AWH, an independent farmer from the age of 19, breeding the oldest herd of Tamworth pigs in England, and who was passionate about her herd of shorthorn cattle and was one of the first to use a mechanical potato harvester, epitomises the contribution of women to modern agriculture. She was clothed in June 1979 and became Master in 1993. It is believed that she, and her son Thomas who was Master Farmer in 2015-16, were the first Mother and Son both to be Masters of livery companies. The Farmers also had the first Mother Master to have a daughter Master (and also Sheriff) - Baroness Byford (2013) and Liz Green (Framework Knitter 2016-7 and Sheriff 2018-9)
55	Farriers	1975	1356/RC1674	1984/5	y	The first was Diana Pagan JP who later became their first woman non-Royal master in 1997. The first woman freeman in their records was in 1762. They are the mother company of HRH The Princess Royal. Like many of the older companies they had many women freemen some of whom were running the businesses of their late husbands
63	Feltmakers	1990	complex early history then RC1604/ L1733	2009/3 cv		Queen Elizabeth I, journeying to Tilbury in 1588, was met by a cheering crowd of men wearing polished beaver hats. [Beaver fur is sometimes felted and the hats would have been made of this.] They were journeymen hatters. On hearing this she said "then such journeymen must be gentlemen". That title ~gentleman~ stayed till well after WWI. There were said to be 7000 feltmakers in 1604. Wills at the Public Records Office show several wealthy Feltmakers.
103	Firefighters	from inception	1988/L2001	2013/2 cv	y	
4	Fishmongers		RC1272	2017/1		The Company has had women freemen for centuries - the latest Quarterage book (which dates from 1840) shows many freewomen throughout via patrimony and redemption. Earlier Quarterage books are now held at Guildhall so available for research there. They have women members currently at all levels.

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39	Fletchers	before 1519, then January 1976	1371/RC2021	2013/3	y/2	The company is unusual in that it was created by prescription. It has only recently obtained its Royal Charter. Essentially they have no apprentice records but believe there would have been girls as well as boys as this was common practice. Their quarterage records show many women, many of whom are widows, who paid the same quarterage as the men. Widows took over their husband's position so would have been, where appropriate, liverymen. Fletchers had many family members, wives, daughters etc. eg there was a daughter apprenticed to her livery mother in 1771. In Cromwell's time widows and single women were clearly invited to join. Many women were members for a very long time which indicates a successful business. The records which survive from 1519 indicate that widows became liverymen and certainly paid those quarterages. There was no date accorded to any clothing of men or women but by the end of the mid 16th c there was a separate widows section. Today they have an active female presence including many honorary freemen who have been Paralympics Archery medal winners and a young apprentice. They also have women on the court whom they hope will progress to being Master in due course.
33	Founders	2005	1365/RC1614	2027		The records show many widows, some freemen, several apprentices, in the early 1500s. They included sisters and journeymen stranger (mainly refugees from France). In recent times, three women were admitted to the freedom by patrimony in 1973.
64	Framework Knitters	1976	1589/LP1657/L1713	2003/6		The Company is unusual since it is one of only two livery companies granted the equivalent of a Royal Charter during the Commonwealth. Admitting women stopped the Ladies Dinners - where they would dine in a separate room to the men (a practice common across the livery at the time).
45	Fruiterers	1758	pre 1300/RC160	2012/2	y	The earliest recorded was Ann Gibson, followed by Sarah Squibb in 1767. Women have been members for many years
95	Fuellers	from revival	1981/L1984/RC2014	2016/4 cv		The history shows that the Fuellers were an ancient company which surrendered its Charter in 1667. It was revived in 1981 as an open company welcoming all eligible
83	Furniture Makers	1985	1951/L1963	2008/3	y	Women were first admitted in 1980 and, after some drawout discussions, three women were clothed in 1985, one of whom, Margaret Miller, became their first woman Master in 2008. The company obtained livery status in March 1964 and was the 6th livery company to obtain (in 2006) its own (first) hall since the 17th century. See also the company's "A Short History"

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66	Gardeners	1974	1345/RC1605	2003/5 cv		The first liverywoman was Honorary - Princess Alice Duchess of Gloucester. Dame Mary Donaldson (as she became) was admitted as a liveryman on 12 February 1975 having become a freeman by redemption on 31 October 1974. Earlier they had widows as free sisters. There is no evidence that the freesisters took any active role in the City. The company became dormant in the 19th C but was revived in 1891. It granted honorary freedom to the gardening author the Hon Alicia Amherst in 1896. In 1974 when the decision was made to extend livery to women, there were strict limits on numbers, those limits were removed in 2000. The Gardeners report that women love the atmosphere caused by having a more or less equal male/female ratio
23	Girdlers	June 2012	1327/RC1449	2026		Pre 1350 records indicate 89 men and 1 woman girdlers. She was Alice Walkeleyen. The first woman liveryman post 19th century was clothed in 2012. They have some stunning cartoons in their Hall! Their first woman master is likely to be appointed in time to celebrate their 700th anniversary.
71	Glass Sellers	1983	1664	2005/4	y	The company had women freemen as far back as 1664, but not many. Hon Freedom was given in 1974 to the wife of a Past Masster, thereafter the next was in 1979 who was clothed in 1993 and became their first lady master. They now have (March 2024) 43 women liverymen.
53	Glaziers	modern livery first was in 1981	1328/RC1638	2005/2	y/2	There were women in the craft - there is evidence of apprentices, and women traders who were regulated by the company. The Ordinances of 1749 clearly include women. Notwithstanding, when an entertainment was organised in 1713 it was made clear that women were not invited! See also Ashdowne's <i>History</i> which makes it clear that women glaziers were regulated by the livery
62	Glovers	from inception	1349/RC1638	1999/4	y/2	Have always had women liverymen eg 1675-78 quarterage book shows 66 men and 25 women in the livery, eg Katherie Clowes is first named in 1676 but there would have been earlier women. Likewise in Victorian times - see Leather Trade Review from 1890s. The Glovers, like many others, struggled to survive in the 19th century as membership shrank but slowly regrew in the 20th. Its charity which is glove-related, recently gave a prosthetic arm to a young teacher born without a forearm see eg https://www.irishnews.com/magazine/daily/2020/06/23/news/-super-teacher-receives-advanced-bionic-hero-arm-1983427/
74	Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers	1703 but probably much earlier	1623/RC1693/L1780	2023/2		1623 is the first year it can be proved due to loss of records. they still have copies of their freedom certificates. They ran a stunning exhibition to celebrate their 400th anniversary at Guildhall which was extended due to being so popular. They also celebrated by having their first woman master and then asked her to run for a second year.

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5	Goldsmiths	1978	1327	2017/2		Goldsmiths have always had women freemen and apprentices. They have some excellent pieces from early women silversmiths. They also discouraged their male goldsmiths from behaving inappropriately to their wives (there is evidence of fines imposed for failure). They have inherited significant bequests from widows of goldsmiths. They also allowed widows to have a company connexion by courtesy and for women to have, where appropriate, a maker's mark (in a lozenge) and to have apprentices. Research shows that there were, eg, some 168 girls apprenticed to goldsmiths between 1576 and 1800. Not all took up their freedom at the end. No women were admitted after 1845 until Ida Cane became free by patrimony in 1961. The next was Gillian Packard by redemption in 1971 followed by Wendy Cook, by service, in 1983. Dame Rosemary Murray was the first women liveryman, and Dame Lynne Brindley the first on the Court of Assistants in 2006.
2	Grocers	1347 (1800s gap) 1983	1345	2027		The first female was Isobel Osekyn in 1347. Another was Lettice Waddesworth/Oo, who traded as an apothecary and was listed as a Grocer in December 1400 (see Bibliography for article). Most women were widows of liverymen and remained members unless they remarried someone from another livery. This continued until the company, like others, was no longer a "mystery" but became more of a gentlemen's club.
73	Gunmakers	1996	RC1637	2018/1		had many widows running their husbands' businesses. It is the company's responsibility to proof guns sold in the UK, a responsibility it now shares with the Birmingham proof house. All gunmakers of ability have always been respected, whether male or female. There are records of payments to those, members and widows, who had fallen on hard times. Since 1996 there have been at least 20 women clothed, including the clerk's wife, their first American woman. Their hall is in what is now Commercial Road the land (formerly part of a physic garden) for the hall and proof house having been acquired in 1675. It is thus not in the City. Their proof mark is GP surmounted by a crown. Only guns with such a proof mark may be sold and only the company can grant it.
8	Haberdashers	1880 x 1 then 1999	1371	2012/2		The Haberdashers admit apprentices and in the 14/15th century about 10% were women. The first Lady Liveryman was admitted in 1880 but that was an exception. Women were only really admitted in 1999. The Haberdashers' history comments that about 10% of apprentices in the medieval times were women and the 17c showed great growth in women apprentices. Their first woman master was the first woman to achieve such office in the Great 12. Their History shows a great camaraderie between their women members and many gifts from them.

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104	Hackney Carriage Drivers	since re-forming	Re-formed after dormancy in 1990/L2004	2006/3	y/3	The Fellowship lay dormant from 1654. On revival, the licences issued that year included those passed to widows of HC drivers though the women did not themselves drive. The first woman was issued with a HCD licence in 1967
54	Horners	1978	1284/RC1638	2012/2		Although the company was technically open to women, their records show only 3 out of 1430 available to view. The grandfather of the first woman master was Lord Mayor in 1949 and Master of the Horners in 1935. There was a statute limiting the export of raw horn from the City or within a 24 mile radius dated 1465.
100	Information Technologists	from inception	1985/L1992/RC 2010	1992/5	y/3	The portrait of the foundation guild meeting (held at Gresham College) in the Court Room at IT Hall shows Dame Stephanie Shirley at the table. The company as at 2023 has had 5 women masters and more are in the wings.
32	Innholders	From inception but in reality 2003	1473/RC1514	2015/1	y	The company has very few of its old records. The original charter embraced both men and women. There is no evidence of any woman being admitted -- save as spectators at events.
92	Insurers	1982	1979/L1979/RC20 15	2019/2	y/2	always open to women
106	International Bankers	from inception	2001/L2004/RC20 07	2013/3	y	Like many modern companies the IB have many women members
10	Ironmongers	2003	1300	<i>early 2030s</i>		From its Charter in 1463, members' widows and daughters, being active in their husbands' and fathers' trades, were also members until 1831 when the last woman was admitted, as the trade connection was ceasing at the time. The last woman so far known to have been admitted before 2004 was Elizabeth Ballant, admitted 29 April 1831. See in more detail www.celebratingcitywomen.co.uk

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41	Joiners and Ceilers	2006	RC1571	<i>forseeable future</i>	y	The company had admitted women to the freedom and to apprenticeship since the 17th century. There are records of at least 640 women between 1660 and 1820. It could be far more but the records were destroyed in the Great Fire. The company membership in the 17th century (freemen, yeomen, journeymen, apprentices) was in the 3000-4000. It is believed women would be at least 1-2% of this figure if not more. Attempts were made in the 1990s to change the Company's ordinances and allow women to take the livery but this was only finally achieved in 2006. This change was initially met with resistance and a secret ballot held for the Livery in 2003 was defeated by a narrow majority. Another attempt in the following year was also defeated despite it being noted that it was "imperative for the Company to admit women....as soon as possible". Finally, at the Court of Livery in July 2006, the motion was carried. They hope to have a woman master in the forseeable future.
89	Launderers	from inception	1960/L1978/RC20 10	2003/2	y/2	women began to join after the Princess Royal attended a dinner and chivvied the then Master.....
15	Leathersellers	1400s to 1700s, then 2004	1444	2022/1		The Leathersellers admitted women freemen via patrimony, servitude and redemption from their earliest days. Whilst early records are lost, it is known that Elizabeth Cockeram was free in 1489. Many women were apprenticed, and many were apprentice-masters, at least 9 between 1612-29. In the 1600s and 1700s at least 47 women were made free, 20 after being apprenticed, 18 by patrimony and 9 by redemption. Figures are not complete. After 1800 only 2 women became free (by patrimony). There followed a gap to 1952 after which 4 women were admitted before 1962 by patrimony, all from the same family. The position changed in 2002 after which time numbers joining have slowly equalised. The Company rarely admits to the livery persons over 40. There is reference to women being "clothed" eg Janet Nightingale in the 1480s, Elizabeth Deane, a trunk maker and widow, 1608 applying for more apprentices and Rebecca Chamlett in 1641. It is believed there were many more. See their <i>History</i> T
96	Lightmongers	from inception	G1967/L1984/ RC2012	2003/3		The information source states that whilst the Ordinances and Byelaws, etc, used "persons", there were very few senior women in the industry. It was as a result only in the 1990s that women began to apply, to the delight of the company. One of their past masters has written a fascinating book <i>Death of a Light Bulb</i> John Otten
57	Loriners	1988	1261/RC1711	1992/5	y	The Company flourished in th early days, then almost died. It has had many Lord Mayor and Sheriff members. One of their early freemen members, Edwina Coven, was the first woman to be elected, in 1973, to the Aldermanic Court, which rejected her! See accompanying research paper

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75	Makers of Playing Cards	2004	1628/L1792	2022/1	y	Women were not given the opportunity to be liverymen after the grant of livery in 1792 though they did retain their connections eg as widows/following apprenticeships, etc . However, the company's History makes it clear that women have always been members. Since women were allowed to be clothed, their numbers have increased to about 10% of the membership. Whilst in modern times the first women court assistant was appointed in 2016, there are records showing that in 1648 Barbara Byworth (believed to be a widow of George) was a court assistant; this is the only example so far discovered by this researcher before the 20th century.
105	Management Consultants	from inception	1992/2004/RC2008	2011/4	y/4	
90	Marketors	from inception	1975/L1977/RC2010	2010/4	y/3	In the early days there were no women largely due to the fact that there were so few women in senior posts. One of the earliest was Margery Hurst, the founder of Brook Street Bureau
30	Masons	2003	1356/RC1677	2020/1	y	The company believes that daughters and widows were enabled to run the family business but think it unlikely that there would have been girl apprentices due to the heavy nature of the work. Their records are in the London Metropolitan Archives.
78	Master Mariners	since inception	RC1926/L1932	2005/1		The original qualification for entry is a Foreign Going Master's Certificate but this has now been added to. In reality it is not a woman's choice of job and as a result the first appointed was not until 1992 as a freeman and the first clothed in 2011. Young women tend to obtain their experience in the cruising industry where the officers are likely to be both male and female as opposed, say, to bulk carriers. As the industry no longer supports their staff to become Master, most people would not wish to put themselves forward for the court and office till they are reaching retirement so that it is believed it will be many years before they have a non-Royal woman master. They have now widened the requirements for entry
1	Mercers	2002	RC1394	2014/2	y/1	Alice Bridenell is the earliest recorded woman freeman and was admitted to the freedom in 1428 (fine 20 shillings). Thereafter there were other women including by servitude until 1797. The next woman admitted was in 2002. Full details in londonroll.org
6/7	Merchant Taylors	1993	1327	2020/1		Women have played a key role in this company at least since the 1400s as freemen and benefactors

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50	Musicians	1983	1350/RC1469/L1500/ RC1604(revoked)/ RC1950	2008/3	y	www.londonroll.org shows that the Musicians had several women freemen between 1750 and 1834, also women apprentices, and widows who took on their husband's membership "by courtesy" or in their own right after his death. Some were free by patrimony, some by servitude and some by redemption. Many took on apprentices, and there were many women apprentices. as at end 2023 roughly 24% of the livery, 58% of the freemen and 40% of the Young Artists are women
65	Needlemakers	1982	LP1656/RC 1664	2011/3	y	Between 1592 and 1950 44 women are recorded as freemen, widows of apprentices, by patrimony and 2 were honorary. Women served apprenticeships and were masters of apprentices. The Needlemakers has never restricted its members to needlemaking . The company is one of only two livery companies having Letters Patent awarded during the Protectorate by Oliver Cromwell. See also www.celebratingcitywomen.co.uk
111	Nurses	from inception	2016/L2023	2016/7 cv		The Nurses are inevitably mainly women-basesd but they do have men as members too. They recently appointed their first man as a court assistant (2020) and are looking forward to his becoming Master in due course
28	Painter-Stainers	Sept 2004, theoretically 1945	1283/RC1581	2030	y	The original ordinances mention women whilst it was unusual to have women members, there is some evidence. eg Mathilda de Mymms died of black death bequeathing her painting utensils to her apprentice. Many painters left their painting equipment to their wives. In 1922 the court debated whether Mrs Swynnerton, the first woman to be elected to the Royal Academy since 1768 should be a member. Increasingly women began to win prizes and at least one asked for the freedom in 1950, five years after the Court had agreed in principle to grant livery to women. It was rejected as it would change the nature of the company. Finally four were admitted in 2004. A. Borg <i>The History of the Worshipful Company of Painters Otherwise Painter-Stainers</i>
n/a	Parish Clerks	n/a	RC1442	2018/1	y/1	
70	Pattenmakers	1969 (with hiatus from 1971-1994)	RC1670/ L1717	2003/3		The company has had women throughout most of its history. Admittedly not huge numbers in their own right, and also widows running the famly business, having apprentices etc. After the abeyance in the 19th and early 20th century, the company resolved to admit women in 1969 and their first lady liveryman (but by no means first freesister) was clothed in January 1970. There was then a hiatus for various reasons until 1994. The company has since had two women masters (2003 and 2009) with more in the pipeline. Women now (2020) make up about 17% of the membership. One honorary freedom was awarded in 1943 to the daughter of a past master. In 1991 it was agreed to offer honorary freedom to widows of court members.

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56	Paviors		1479/RC2004	2019/1		Had widows as members who ran their husbands' business. The company diminished in size when its control over street works and industry practices was lost but was revived in 1889
16	Pewterers	1996	1348/RC1473	2017/3		The records are sketchy on women. as they only record liverymen which until recently women were not. In 1633 Katherine Westwood daughter of a pewterer, was sworn and made free by the testimony of the Master and Wardens of the Merchant Taylors and two silk weavers that she was a virgin and 21 years of age. She paid the usual patrimony fine of 9s 2d. A rare instance of a female being admitted to membership. The company has records of women being pursued for misdemeanors such as quality standards
46	Plaisterers	2002	RC1501			
31	Plumbers	1920, gap to 1982	1315/RC1611	2015/2		Countess Bathurst was clothed in 1920 thereafter no women till 1982. In earlier times the Plumbers occasionally granted freedom by patrimony, and by courtesy to widows. They also had a "shopkeeper" class which paid £40 and allowed apprenticeships. There is at least one record of a freedom by patrimony in 1724 to Sarah Sergeant. Her mother, a widow, had had at least 4 (male) apprentices.
34	Poulters		1299/RC1504	2022/1	y	
25	Saddlers	1996	c 1160 RC 1272	2013/2		Records show names of freewomen and Wills indicate that normally they were widows though there is at least one saddler in her own right. Women decorated and embroidered many early saddles. The company began to accept women by patrimony in 1923. HRH The Princess Royal is their Perpetual Master. Their annual head is a Prime Warden. The Saddlers had limits on the numbers of women freemen they could have (50) but after obtaining a supplemental Royal Charter in 1995 the distinction between freemen and women disappeared.
9	Salts	2003	1394/RC1559	2020/2		Although low in numbers, women are certainly present in the Salters' history. The earliest surviving records show 54 freewomen between the 1650s and 1900, some 145 female apprentices between 1600-180 and between 20-30 freewomen who took apprentices between 1659 and 1776. Their numbers began to rise after the 19th century. Several of their women took apprentices and some had and/or were apprenticed to other trades, eg wire drawer, and woollen draper, and milliner. See Londonroll.org for more detail.
84	Scientific Instrument Makers	from inception	1955/L1963/RC2021	2025	y	The first woman member was an outstanding candidate who initially worked at an electron microscopy manufacturer, now owned by Zeiss. Although always open to women, the first to apply for livery was in 1977.

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44	Scriveners	mid 1970s	1333/RC1617	2006/4		The first woman member was in 1665 - Elizabeth Billingsley. She was apprenticed to James Windus (Master 1669). There were other apprentices and also daughters entering by patrimony. The company concentrates on its history through its notary liverymen and the firms they established in the City. The first woman to qualify as a notary in the City was Eleanor Fogan and Ruth Campbell (Master in 2010) was the 4th. In order to practise they had also to be liverymen. The company sets the notary public exams and has since the 1970s widened its interest into calligraphy and heraldry
108	Security Professionals	from inception	1999/L2008/RC 2010	2003/2	y/3	
59	Shipwrights	1980s	1100s/L1782	2022/1		Shipwrighting is not perceived as a natural female job but many widows would have continued their husband's trade. In more recent times the company gave freedom to wives of Masters to say thank you to them for the contribution during the year, provided they were themselves also in the trade. One such was Lady Parsons who was granted freedom in 1922 (see more about her in the linked research paper). The company was originally recognised by prescription (before 1189) and there are records back as early as the 13th century where people are described as Citizen and Shipwright. Many records are lost. Their second Prime Warden is expected in 2028-29 – Catherine Mulvihill.
6/7	Skinners	1991	1327	2013/4		The Skinners had women members by patrimony and via apprenticeship throughout their history - 95 freemen between 1496-1966 and 119 apprentices. Freewomen also helped on committees and charities. The first women to join the court was in 2000. The first six clothed had worked on committees for the Company for many years.
79	Solicitors	believe from date of livery status but probably 1970s	1909 L1944, RC 1958	2006/4	y/2	The company was until 2006 the City of London's local law society so anyone practising as a solicitor in the City would have been entitled to join whatever their sex. However, that was only the case after the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919. Before then, (the company was founded in 1908) as women were not in law permitted to be lawyers (due to being held not to be a "person"), they would not have been qualified to join. The first woman solicitor dates from 1923. It is thought no woman applied till the 1970s.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
60	Spectacle Makers	1919	granted livery 1809	1990/4	y	Dame Laura Rebecca Marshall was the first to be given livery, she was the wife of the then Master. The first liveryman in her own right was Elizabeth Maud Weston who was clothed on 1 December 1921. There is no obvious reason as to why these were the first women to be clothed. The Company has always been open to women members and had its first recorded in 1699 though there are earlier records showing women paying quarterage and training apprentices. The first woman to qualify taking the Spectacle Makers exams was in 1898. See linked research paper, and Virginia Rounding in Bibliography
47	Stationers		1403/RC1557	2015/2		www.londonroll.org shows several freesisters, widows, apprentices. The last noted before 1900 was a widow in 1858
21	Tallow Chandlers	2004	1300/RC1462	2026		have had women freemen (35) and apprentices (50) since mid 1600s - see londonroll.org. The first woman to be clothed was Elizabeth Hale. They also made their Beadle's widow in 1800 their acting beadle, a position she held for 11 years - see Virginia Rounding
107	Tax Advisers	from inception	1995/L2005/RC2009	2005/4 cv		Two of the founder members were women, of whom one was a founder court assistant and first (woman) Master appointed after grant of livery. The Tax Advisers provide tax briefings to the Lord Mayor for his outbound missions, also inbound if requested
67	Tin Plate Workers	1988, 1st apptd1993	1670	2021/2	y	TPWWW had women freemen from its earliest days. The decision to extend livery to women was taken in the early 1990s, and 4 women were clothed in February 1993 They had clothed 10 women by 2000. They had planned their first woman master for their 350th year, but covid intervened.
82	Tobacco Pipe Makers	1992	1954	2011/2	y/2	Originally founded in 1619 to regulate the manufacture of clay pipes it has been twice dissolved and twice restarted. When refounded in 1954 it was not open to women. After some pressure by the daughter of one liveryman, they agreed to allow her the freedom by patrimony. In due course, the company clothed its first woman. It now has several women on its court. The original 1619 company is known to have allowed widows to take over their husband's livery status in order to continue to run the business. Whether it had other women members is not known
51	Turners	1986	1295/RC1604	2006/2 cv		Women members were normally widows but there were some admitted by redemption and there were honorary freemen such as Baroness Burdett Coutts in 1892, and two for their skills in turning: Lady Amherst of Hackney in 1893 and Lady Gertrude Crawford in 1907. After much debate, it was agreed to accept women members on the same terms as men in 1986. The first clothed was in 1987

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38	Tylers & Bricklayers	ab initio, then 1999	1416/RC1568	2018/1	y	Official recognition of women is enshrined in the 1568 charter which makes it clear there were already sisters in the guild. Bricklayers Hall had been acquired from Eliza Dyall, Citizen and Tyler. There were more women recorded in 17th and 18th centuries, but a gap in the 19th. There are at least two instances of widows admitted to livery following husbands' deaths - but recorded that livery would cease once the relevant apprentices had finished their service (or were taken over by another liveryman [so it would have been "by courtesy" only). In the 1980s and early 1990s there were several discussions about women liverymen culminating with a decision that all new freemen (both men and women) should initially have to serve five years as a freeman before being considered for clothing. The first two women clothed were daughters of a past master. And see " <i>They Built London</i> "
49	Upholders	2002	c 1360/ RC1626	2015/4 cv	y/3	Wynne Gilham was the first woman liveryman also master
11	Vintners	1992	1363	2021/1		records sadly fail to show any women freemen earlier than 1980. Vintners would have had their first Lady master in July 2020 but for Covid.
102	Water Conservators	from inception	1988/2000	2004/3	y	
n/a	Watermen & Lightermen	n/a	1555/1827	2020/1	y/1	The company is regulated and created by two Acts of Parliament due to the importance of the River Thames.
20	Wax Chandlers	1981	1371/RC1484	2008/4		
42	Weavers	1987	1130/RC1155	2008/1	y	Whilst the company goes back to Henry I and earlier, there are no records indicating women liverymen before 1987 when Pat Winterton (CBE, Glover and daughter of a Past Upper Bailiff) and the then Assistant Clerk, Freda Newcombe (who later became their first woman master), were clothed. There is evidence of women members by redemption, widows, and apprentices. The Royal Charter, the first in the City, was attested by Thomas a'Beckett. Their earlier ordinances stated "no woman or mayd shall use or exercise the arts of weaving, except she be the widow of one of the same guild" - that was changed in the 17th c. The Company did however have many women in the freedom - see Plummer <i>The London Weavers' Company 1600-1970</i> . Two women who hand wove the silk velvets for the Queen's Coronation in 1953 were given freedom. (Hand made velvet is very difficult to do, each inch requires cutting the pile wires 40 times.)
68	Wheelwrights	1976	1630/RC1670	2014/1	y/2	Women were admitted to the freedom by 1670 till mid 19th c. - they were usually widows or by patrimony. No woman was admitted after 1838 (she was by patrimony) until 1976. The first two were daughters of a past master and former Lord Mayor. See also Wheelwrights History

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43	Woolmen	1988	1180	1994/2	y	Women have been appointed freemen since 1671. Women became re-eligible from 1925, where daughters of liverymen, to be apprenticed. The first completed her apprenticeship in 1932 and became free then. It appears that none of the earlier women asked for livery. The company also appointed a beadle's widow to take over his job in 1820
101	World Traders	from inception	1985/L2000/RC20 13	2000/8	y	
	Modern Companies and Guilds without Livery					
n/a	H R Professionals	from inception	2015	2016/4	y/1	
n/a	Investment Managers	from inception	2015	2022/1		
n/a	Guild of Freemen	1967	1908	2002/7		In November 1923 The Court decided to defer a decision on the admission of women to formal membership of the Guild
n/a	Guild of Young Freemen	from inception	1976	1976/13		The guild was formed as a society and achieved Guild status in 2013. Its founder chairman was a woman who served for three years.
n/a	Hon Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America	from inception	1980	1999/3		The company is based in Toronto but is continent wide. Has permission to use the Coat of Arms of the City on its letterhead.

This project arose out of Lockdown and as a result of a decision to while away a couple of hours (??? - I must have been mad!) writing a short note to explain the background to the Lady Masters Association which was formed in 2015 before we all forgot it. That project expanded. It was quickly realised that there was not enough information on the web to enable this spreadsheet and the expanded article to be as complete as both have become. The author is hugely grateful to all those liverymen, past masters, former sheriffs and lord mayors, wardens, clerks, other friends and many others who have helped her to track down information. She hopes there are no errors, but, if there are, those errors are hers alone. Apart from each company's website and the material available there, other sources she has found to research for information are listed below. Much information came via email. If you should wish to make any amendments or to add any information, please email me via Linked-In. It would be good to be able to complete the obvious gaps and to correct any errors.

Women in the Livery and in High Civic Office in the City: Appendices

Note: 1 Virginia Rounding's City Women makes it clear, however, that even if women were described as liverymen they did not necessarily have the same rights in pre-Victorian times - eg they were not involved in the running of the company. Though see the note above from the Makers of Playing Cards. And see the author's research paper

Note: 2 The accompanying research paper on the legal background to women's rights, which seriously affected their position within the livery in the main body of this document

Heather Hawker (PM Wax Chandler) reports the London Poll Book (livery list) of 1548 shows 4 women - 1 Wax Chandler,
2 Saddlers and 1 Baker

APPENDIX V

23 January 2024: Honouring Sylvia Tutt, WCCSA Company Lunch, Drapers' Hall.

Reproduced here with kind permission of Past Master Christina Parry

Sylvia Tutt made history when she was installed as Master of our Livery Company [the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries] in 1983. Not only was she our first female Master, she was the very first female Master in the 900 year old existence of the Livery itself. Since then the glass ceiling has been well and truly shattered. But back in the nineteen eighties this was pioneering stuff.

Make no mistake, Sylvia Tutt achieved her distinction entirely on professional and personal merit. After leaving school aged 16 she went to work for the Prudential Assurance Company and studied for the examinations of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries. She qualified professionally in 1950, itself a comparative rarity, and rose steadily up the corporate ladder. By 1960 she was Head of Investment Settlements, the department reconciling investment dealings on every Prudential fund, reporting directly to the Board and Trustees. A most senior position. She maintained her technical edge throughout her career, attending professional lectures, conferences and authoring expert papers. But enough of the business biography. With the Master's consent, I want to give a more personal account of Sylvia Tutt the woman. Actually, this is quite difficult, as Sylvia was an intensely private person, and her character has to be interpreted from her activities, personal papers and the recollections of those who knew her.

Sylvia's father was Chief Clerk at Thomas Cook, the travel firm which then dominated the industry. Sylvia and her elder brother Leslie grew up in a close, loving family, which valued scholarship and professional fellowship. Sylvia commented that 'I have always lived in a family home in which textbooks and papers on mathematics, economics and finance have been scattered about'. These influences also rubbed off onto her brother Leslie, who became an actuary and prolific technical author. He and Sylvia were very close, with Leslie almost invariably attending events as Sylvia's civic escort. Neither married, and both lived in the family home together until their deaths.

The Tutt family enjoyed an affluent lifestyle, based around elite social events, sport and overseas travel. This is where the panache and style that characterised the private Sylvia developed. She learned to play golf at Roehampton Club, under the eagle eye of Syd Scott, a British Ryder Cup player. Family visits to Switzerland saw Sylvia joining the British team in the bobsleigh racing at St Moritz. She enjoyed fast cars. And dancing, at Caledonian club events, and at the many prestige functions she attended with her parents and brother. Sylvia was a handsome, confident woman, and it's clear from the photos that she enjoyed the big occasion. The beautiful gowns, exquisite jewels, furs, worn with poise, dignity and grace.

Sylvia brought all this character into play in her prolific civic activities. From the outset she immersed herself in the Institute of Chartered Secretaries, and particularly London Branch, and the ICSA Women's Society, becoming its President in 1975/76. She gave them a whale of a time: 'I chose to give a Buffet and Champagne Party at my parents' home in July; So many came, it was such a delightfully warm and sunny day, with the gardens looking quite beautiful and we followed on in the evening indoors with some music and dancing'. She hosted the Annual Dinner at the Cafe Royal, securing as speaker, Sheila Scott OBE: an actress, and pioneer aviator - 'the woman who has flown solo three times round the world including a first, world flight via the North Pole in a light aircraft'.

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Sylvia's involvement in numerous civic organisations gave her a thorough grounding in their governance and leadership demands. Quite apart from being Master of our Company, which we celebrate today, Sylvia Tutt was variously

President, Soroptimists International of Central London,
President, Farringdon Ward Club,
President, United Wards Club of the City of London,
First woman President, the City Livery Club,
Chairman and Vice President of the Royal Society of St George City of London Branch,
First woman Liveryman, and later Master, the Worshipful Company of Scriveners,
Member, Guild of Freeman.

But back to Sylvia's most memorable legacy as our Master and the first woman to become Master of any Livery Company. She was usually the only woman at the table, either on business or civic occasions. She welcomed the day when in 1983 the City Livery Club opened its door to women, saying - 'often one engages in business meetings in the City- it was sometimes a little embarrassing when those attending such a business meeting were excluded from lunching together at the club because of the presence of one woman at the meeting'. Even when Sylvia Tutt was Master Chartered Secretary, and hosted our Company Livery Dinner at Mansion House in 1984, she followed tradition, and only male guests were invited.

Typically, as Master, Sylvia played safe, with meticulous attention to upholding Livery traditions and the highest standards in her activities as Master - 'How delightful such evenings are, when manners are immaculate, when the venue is so artistic, when traditions are respected'. Sylvia knew she was on show. And she was a celebrity. Her first Banquet in this very Hall was a sell-out, oversubscribed and attended by 229 people. She received record numbers of invitations, and as a guest was often asked to propose one of the toasts. With Lady Mary Donaldson's election as Lord Mayor, she and Sylvia Tutt became the two leading ladies of the Livery in 1984, and each held office with great style and grace.

...[L]ike all eminent people, Sylvia Tutt was a multi-faceted and talented individual. She was determined to show that a woman could enjoy life, deliver competently in a senior business role, handle complex leadership duties and enhance civic life. As the very first woman Master, Sylvia Tutt put the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators firmly on the Livery's historic timeline. And as our Master she excelled, and set a standard we can all remember with pride.

Written and delivered by Christina Parry, Past Master WCCSA

APPENDIX VI

WOMEN CLERKS

The first woman clerk was appointed in 1985. There had been before that several women assistant clerks and there continues to be many women (and men) assistant clerks.

The longest serving woman clerk to date is **Amanda Jackson**, who served the Chartered Surveyors for 33 years and is hoping to bring her time up to 35 years. For 26 years of her time with the Surveyors she was also the clerk to the Joiners and Ceilers.

Other long-serving women clerks include:

Sheila Robinson who was clerk to the Solicitors company from 1985 to 2001 and also clerk to the Builders Merchants from 1990 to 2007. (The Solicitors and the Builders Merchants share the same premises.)

Charlotte Clifford was been clerk to the Farriers (a company with which her family has long-standing connexions) from 1997 to December 2022, and

Gaye Duffy, who has served, at various times from 1995 to date the Arbitrators, the Marketors and the World Traders.

As at December 2023, 55 livery companies have had at least one woman clerk, and over a third of them have had 2 or more and as there are clearly many changes happening in 2024 there will be more to add including the Solicitors 4th female appointment

There were 6 companies which had women clerks for the first time before 1990, 14 more in the period 1991-2000, 15 more in the period 2001-2010 and a further 15 in the period 2011-2020, making the full 50. The Parish Clerks also have a woman clerk as also have had the Watermen.

Only two Great Twelve companies, the Mercers and, from 2024, the Goldsmiths, have so far had a woman clerk. There has been a total of 27 out of the 77 ancient companies and the balance of 23 from the modern companies.

Currently, (March 2024) there are known to be at least 36 women clerks (some companies are in process of appointment of new clerks).

No survey has as such been taken of male clerks. But looking at Nigel Pullman's remarkable spreadsheet <http://www.liverycompanies.info/a-z-list-of-companies/lists/past-masters- archive.html> which contains details of lord mayors, sheriffs, masters, clerks, chiel commoners and a whole host of other remarkable information, it is clear that men have paid a very important part in the history of livery companies as clerks.

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APPENDIX VII

BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC MASTERS OF LIVERY ETC COMPANIES AND/OR HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

Livery Companies

	Name	Company/Society	Year
1	James Townsend	Mercers	1769-70
2	Mohammed Jalie	Spectacle Makers	1993-94
3	Mei Sim Lai	World Traders	2011-12
4	Sir Ken Olisa	WCIT	2011-12
5	Lord Bernard Ribeiro	Barber Surgeons	2013-14
6	Mr Issa K Tahhan	Environmental Cleaners	2014-15
7	Flavian D'Souza	Master Mariners	2016-17
8	Noorzaman Rashid	Management Consultants	2016-17
9	Jashvantrai Joshi	Blacksmiths	2018-19
10	Shraven Joshi	Fuellers	2019-20
11	Dr Michel Saminaden	Tylers & Bricklayers	2020-21
12	Yasmeen Stratton	Security Professionals	2020-21
13	Maria Chanmugan	Glass Sellers	2022-23
14	Air Vice Marshall Aroop Mozumder	Apothecaries	2023-24
15	Kanan Barot	Management Consultants	2023-24

Guilds and City Organisations

	Name	Company	Year
1	Mei Sim Lai	City Livery Club	2006-07
2	Ishrani Jaikaran	Freemen of N America	2017-18
3	Omar Massoud Asfar	Guild of Young Freeman	2018-19
4	Anjola Adeniyi	Guild of Young Freeman	2019-20
5	Shai Umradia	City Livery Club	2021-22
6	Hans Bathija	Freemen of N America	2022-23

City officers

	Name	Office held	Year
1	James Townsend	Alderman (Bishopsgate) and Sheriff [and see <i>Wikipedia</i>]	1769
2	James Townsend	Lord Mayor	1772-73
3	Baroness Scotland	Alderman, Bishopsgate	2014

Other guilds

	Name	Guild	Year
1	Agnes Xavier-Phillips	Livery Company of Wales	2024

Source: Picture book archive <https://www.liverypictures.com/picture-book-library> and <http://www.liverycompanies.info/a-z-list-of-companies/lists/past-masters-archive.html> also from the companies/societies/guilds. There are also known to be at least two "missing" Masters from the list, both of whom despite being officers of their respective companies, failed to get there due to illness.

The first should have been Master Tax Adviser in September 2006. The second should have been Master Gold and Silver Wyre Drawer in January 2012.

APPENDIX VIII

WOMEN ALDERMEN, CHIEF COMMONERS, SHERIFFS AND LORD/LADY MAYORS

	Aldermen	Note some women prefer to be called Alderwoman
1973	<i>Edwina Coven</i>	<i>Elected twice for the Ward of Dowgate, but was refused by the Court of Aldermen</i>
1975	Lady (Mary) Donaldson	Coleman Street Ward
2002	Alison Gowman	Dowgate Ward
2005	Fiona Woolf	Candlewick Ward
2014	Baroness Scotland	Bishopsgate Ward, first ethnic minority female alderman
2018	Dame Sue Langley	Aldgate Ward
2018	Emma Edhem	Candlewick Ward
2022	Jennette Newman	Walbrook Ward
2022	Susan Pearson	Cripplegate Ward
2023	Martha Grekos	Castle Baynard
2022?	Elizabeth King	Cripplegate
Note	Lady Donaldson was also the first woman to become a Common Councilman. She was became the first woman Alderman. She was then encouraged to stand for the Mayoralty.	
	Chief Commoner	
1987	Edwina Coven	Dowgate
1999	Barbara Newman	Aldersgate
2003	Joyce Nash	Aldersgate
2007	Pauline Halliday	Walbrook
2017	Wendy Mead	Farringdon Without
2023	Ann Holmes	Farringdon Within
Note	Chief Commoners are elected each year by the Court of Common Council	
	Sheriffs	
1981	Lady (Mary) Donaldson	who became Lord Mayor (and Dame) in 1983
1999	Pauline Ann Halliday	who won following an election after a poll, there were 4 candidates for two places, Ald Robert Finch who was Lord Mayor in 2003, Pauline, Ald Peter Bull and anor
2010	Fiona Woolf	who became Lord Mayor in 2013
2011	Wendy Mead	who was the second woman to win a contested election following a poll which was demanded for Bonham. The votes at Common Hall (pre poll) were 1129 Yarrow, 550 Mead, 505 Bonham and 194 Whitton
2014	Fiona Adler	no opponents. Fiona was also the aldermanic consort in 2017 for Tim Hailes
2015	Christine Rigden	no opponents
2018	Liz Green	who became non-aldermanic sheriff without a poll being demanded despite 2 strong opponents, the other two being

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2021	Alison Gowman	Gwen Rhys and Richard Fleck Alderman, no opponents
2023	Dame Sue Langley	Alderwoman

Lord and Lady Mayors

1983	Dame Mary Donaldson	appointed GBE contemporaneously with her mayoralty
2013	Fiona Woolf	became DBE in the 2015 New Year Honours
2025	Dame Sue Langley	sitting as Lady Mayor

Note	Two sheriffs are appointed each year on Midsummer Day, the appointment takes effect from (usually) the day before Michaelmas Day. Usually, one is promoted by the Aldermanic Court and the other is a layman. Occasionally, two Aldermanic Sheriff are appointed	
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The Lord Mayor must be an alderman and must also have been sheriff. The election takes place on Michaelmas Day and he/she is sworn in the day before the 2nd Saturday in November

The Lord Mayor's Show takes place the following day. In 1215 King John gave the City the right to elect a Lord Mayor and he required the new Lord Mayor to "show" himself to the monarch.

Originally, the Lord Mayor would proceed up river by boat, in due course there would be a flotilla of support: boats and barges, gaily decorated. Eventually, it became a mainly street-based show, but the exhibits continue to be called floats, from the boats and barges.. The Lord Mayor nowadays is "shown" to representatives of the monarch at the Royal Courts of Justice

APPENDIX IX

WOMEN IN THE LIVERY SURVEY REPORT 2024

Foreword

It is necessary to put the figures into context. That context shows that in 1970 there were only 6 companies of the 77 old liveries and 4 of the then 7 modern liveries which accepted women on an equal basis. These figures have risen slowly: by 1990 47 of the old liveries and all the then 25 new liveries accepted women; by 2010 68 of the old liveries accepted women and 31 of 31 new companies. Full parity across the liveries was not achieved until 2020. Also, it is clear that even in the 2020s, and despite all the work the livery does for eg education, other charity, the entries in the Lord Mayor's Show, it is not "known". Many potential members do not understand that it exists or, if they do, believe it is "exclusive". Even today, it is possible to speak to otherwise well-informed people to find they ask "what is the livery?" when it is raised with them.

Those who responded

1. All the liveries, companies without livery and guilds in the City have responded to the request for a numbers breakdown by sex, save one, whose clerk reported that his master stated that

"Whilst the ['] Company shares the widely held aspiration to engender a more diverse membership across the Livery world, it does not share its membership information such as sex, race, nationality, religion or gender identity outside the Company".

Sad, as at least 3 of that livery's previous Masters supported the research. I comment only that I have figures taken from the old "Blue Book" for 2017 which I have used in this report. They show that that livery had in 2016-7 164 members of whom at least two were women (only one had an obviously female title and the other was known to this researcher but not described as such as female, so there may have been others).

2. The total **livery** membership reported is **26216** and of those who also have freemen as a separate category the freemen membership is **16552**. In total therefore the Livery has a reported total **42768** members
 - a. There is one small caveat here in that one livery reported that it has no mechanism to breakdown their livery and other members. The figures are fractionally distorted as a result.
3. Some liveries gave me figures for the split between trade and others, student members of one sort or another, and apprentices. Several differentiated between their members and those sitting on their Courts. I have kept solely to livery (to which court members have been added as they will be liverymen) and freemen categories where I have been given that breakdown save in the one case where the split was

not available.

The figures and what they show

4. The sex breakdown across the **Livery** is
 - a. MALE Livery 21520, Free 11417
 - b. FEMALE Livery 4696, Free 5135
 - c. The percentage of female
 - i. Livery is 17.91
 - ii. Freemen is 31.02
 - iii. Total livery membership: **22.99**
 - d. Note, there was one person who was reported not to have disclosed his or her sex. As only one was reported, he/she has been assumed to be male. To that extent there is a built-in potential error of 0.0002338%
 5. The **total non livery** – ie guilds and companies without livery (including the two ancient worshipful companies) – figures are
 - a. MALE 970
 - b. FEMALE 281
 - c. Total therefore **1284**.
 - d. The percentage of women members is thus **34.39**
 6. All liversies, (worshipful and other) companies without livery and guilds have at least one woman member though not all liversies reported having women *livery* members.
 7. The liversies with the **25 highest female livery percentages** have an average of **32.3% female livery** and **41.03% female freemen**
 8. The liversies with the **25 lowest female livery percentages** have an average of **7.82% female livery** and **13.88% female freemen**
 9. The liversies in the **middle 50 of female livery percentages** have an average of **19.52% female livery** and **38.4% female freemen**
 10. Ignoring the 5 liversies with the 5 highest and 5 lowest percentages of female livery membership there are in **those 101 liversies** 24571 livery members and 15336 freemen members, a **female percentage of 17.25 livery and 29.98 freemen**
- Liversies with a freeman class**
11. Twelve liversies have no freemen as such – their freemen are solely on the way to the livery ie awaiting City Freedom grant or the next court meeting which the individual is able to attend.
 12. Of the 99 companies with a freeman class, 1 only reported no female freemen (but the freeman class comprised 2 people), 14 reported over 50% of their freemen were female, 15 reported female percentages of over 40% but under 50%, 18 reported female freemen percentages in the 30-40% range

13. Of the 14 liveries with over **50% female freemen** 7 report under 20% female livery, 5 less than 40% female livery, the other 2 having over 40% women livery. All these companies bar 2 are ancient companies.
14. Of the 15 liveries with more than **40% but less than 50% female freemen**, only one had a similar percentage of female livery, 7 have between 22.5%-27.78% female livery, 6 have between 13.25% to 18.34% and the 15th has under 10% female livery. All these liveries are ancient liveries.
15. Of the 18 liveries in the **30-40% female freemen range**, 4 had more than 30% female liverymen, 3 had more than 20% female liverymen, 10 had between 11.01% to 19.23%, and the last had less than 10%. The liveries in this group were 15 ancient 3 modern.
16. Of the 23 liveries in the **20-30% female freemen range**, 1 had more than 30% female livery, 4 had more than 20% female livery, 13 had more than 10% livery and the balance of 5 had less than 10% female livery. The breakdown of liveries in this grouping is ancient 13 and modern 10.
17. Of the 19 liveries in the **10-20% female freemen range**, 1 had in excess of 30% female livery, 1 in excess of 20% female livery, 12 in excess of 10% female livery and the balance of 5 had less than 10% female livery. The breakdown between ancient and modern is 11 ancient and 8 modern
18. There are 10 companies with a freemen class which have less than 10% female livery. Of that group, 1 has over 30% female livery, 2 have between 10-20% female livery, 5 have between 5-10% female livery, and the remaining 2 less than 5%, This group consists of 5 ancient and 5 modern

Analysing the liveries dispassionately:

1. it is difficult to extrapolate from the outside what encourages women to join. It's reasonably clear that, where there is a strict not necessarily woman-friendly professional base, which happens with some of the modern companies but not many of the ancient, there are fewer women members.
2. It's also not easy to see from the outside why others (ie those without a strict not necessarily woman-friendly professional base) but not all by any means have good proportions (say over 30%) of women members and others do not.
3. Where there is a big differential between the percentages of women freemen and the much lower numbers of women liverymen one does wonder the extent to which
 - a. women feel unable to seek livery,
 - b. the livery itself makes it more difficult for women to advance, or finally
 - c. the potential liveryman is waiting for "dead men's shoes" the livery being limited and currently full.

4. There is also no apparent correlation between numbers of women masters and the percentages of women members. Some of the liveries with high women percentages have had significant numbers of women masters others definitely not. Similarly, those with few women members may still have had several (more than 2 or 3) women masters and/or have potential women masters in their pipelines.
5. What is clear is that each of the various liveries believe theirs is (a) the best and (b) the most friendly, etc.

It is understood that there are **several liveries looking to improve their female base**, some more successfully than others. However, I gave an undertaking to disclose no names so will mention none of those names here. Suffice to say that some, but by no means all, appear to have interests and activities which could be described as being more appealing to women than others; so that in itself “women appeal” is not necessarily a factor explaining why some liveries have a higher percentage of women members than others.

I have not surveyed the **impact of freemasonry** on the livery. I am aware that several liveries have their own masonic lodge. I understand that there are also lodges available to those who have been masters of liveries, or for high civic officers. These, of course, are not open to women. To the extent that there may be women lodges at all (which I know to have been severely discouraged by Grand Lodge in the 1960s) they will not have the same “clout” as male lodges and it’s certainly conceivable that a livery having its own lodge might be off-putting to a potential woman member, but I have not sought for and have no evidence of this.

The Companies without Livery and the Guilds*.

There are, as stated above, 1284 members of the non-liveried companies and the guilds, with a female average percentage of 24.45. Two of these companies are worshipful (and ancient) companies and the rest are modern companies (2) and guilds (2) each of which is hoping for livery in due course. The range of female membership of each of the 6 entities is from less than 10% to just under 48%. Each of the five groups of percentages (1-10, 11-20 etc) has at least one company/guild within it.

---oOo---

I would like to thank all those liveries, companies without livery and guilds who responded so helpfully to this survey. When I first discussed with others the best way of discovering the gender differential between the different liveries, etc., it was thought that Guildhall would have the information. We asked: it does not. Hence the survey.

Finally, I would welcome any comments on the paper.

Erica Stary, September 2024

*At the time of writing there are 111 Livery Companies with at least two more expected in the near future. The later two are dealt with as non-livery in this paper.

APPENDIX X: RIGHTS TO VOTE AT COMMON HALL

(included here as it seems not everyone knows)

Attendance: All **liverymen** (but NOT their spouses or other guests) are entitled to attend. Tickets are free and distributed through the livery clerk. It is often very crowded and whilst the seats in Guildhall itself are available for those arriving early enough, others may have to be seated in overspill rooms. Freemen may **not** attend

To vote, a liveryman must have been clothed prior to May in the preceding year.

The reason for *the requirement to have been a liveryman since May* the previous year is, like everything else to do with the Livery, historical. In the past, it was not unknown for companies to pack their livery with new members at the last minute, who would then vote for their company's preferred candidate. The May rule effectively prevented this practice, and has never been removed.

Of course, as I hope people will have realised, women, even if termed liverymen in their own livery companies, would not have been allowed to vote prior to the 1918 Representation of the People Act (and at that stage satisfied the appropriate property interests and were over 30).

City of London Elections and the Franchise – An Historical View

(included here with the kind permission of the author¹⁸⁹)

1. This note sets out how the franchises for different elections within the City have evolved since the medieval period to the present day, considering elections to Parliament, the Common Council, the Court of Aldermen and the mayoralty.¹⁹⁰
2. For the majority of the Corporation's existence, the franchise within the City of London was based on the freedom of the City, the mark of membership of the commune that brought with it both privileges and obligations.
3. As noted by a former Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court, the privileges of a freeman were extensive — *"No one but a freeman could keep shop or exercise a trade in the City. No one but a freeman could claim exemption from tolls at markets and fairs or ports. No one but a freeman householder could vote at elections of Aldermen and Common Councilmen. No one but a freeman and liveryman could vote at parliamentary elections or at elections of Lord Mayor and sheriffs. No one but a freeman could be an Alderman or Common Councilman. The non-freeman had no trading privileges and no say at all in the government of the city."*¹⁹¹
4. When considering the City's franchise across history, the distinction drawn today between residential and business voters is an unhelpful lens. The freedom of the City

¹⁸⁹ And also with thanks to Ald Prof Michael Mainelli who drew this to my attention

¹⁹⁰ This note does not, however, consider why some of these changes happened, with the fuller background contained in some of the documents referenced below, particular with regard to nineteenth century franchise reforms.

¹⁹¹ J F V Woodman, *The Freedom of the City of London: Some Notes on its History, Customs and Privileges*, 1960 (published in the Journal of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners).

was gained *solely* through membership of a livery company until 1835 — when eligibility for the freedom of the City was extended to anyone who lived in, worked in or had a strong connection to the City — and in English towns residence was also a normative requirement of citizenship,¹⁹² so resident tradespeople by definition formed the City's electorate.

5. The relationship between citizenship and craft membership was cemented in the City of London in the fourteenth century, when the livery companies “pressed the mayor and aldermen and later the king to agree that anyone seeking to purchase the freedom in order to trade had first to elicit the permission of the craft he wished to follow. [...] Craft sponsorship was to be the only pathway to citizenship.”¹⁹³ Indeed, it was not until the 1867 City of London Municipal Elections Act that the restrictions on non-freemen and non-residents voting was eased, in response to the depopulation of the City and changing business practices that eroded the wards' electoral bases.
6. It was from these nineteenth and twentieth century changes that the present day residential and business franchises emerged – in the long view, craft membership and residency were the dual criteria for the Freedom and the franchise.

Parliamentary Elections

7. The earliest parliamentary elections in London had an electorate formed of the freemen of the City. From the late 13th century onwards, however, the choice of MPs was made by a smaller, select group comprising the mayor, all or most of the aldermen and four or six ‘better and more discreet’ representatives from each of the city wards.¹⁹⁴
8. As the fourteenth century progressed, the names of the candidates were sometimes presented by this group to the freemen assembled in the Court of Hustings, or later, at the Court of Common Council, for their ratification.¹⁹⁵ By the sixteenth century, the procedure had developed so that the Aldermen first chose one of their own number and the Recorder as two of the City's four Members and then nominated up to 12 candidates below the rank of alderman for election by the commonalty assembled in the Great Hall.¹⁹⁶
9. This procedure continued into the seventeenth century, when it evolved so that the right to elect Members to Parliament was exercised solely by the Livery, rather than all freemen.¹⁹⁷
10. This franchise was expanded in the nineteenth century beyond those with the Freedom of the City, when the **1832 Reform Act** extended it to include inhabitant householders and those occupiers of premises with an annual rental value of £10 or

¹⁹² Christian Liddy, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, 1250-1530*, 2017.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ History of Parliament Trust, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1386-1421*, ed. J.S. Roskell, L. Clark, C. Rawcliffe, 1993.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ History of Parliament Trust, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1509-1558*, ed. S. T. Bindoff, 1982.

¹⁹⁷ History of Parliament Trust, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1660-1690*, ed. B. D. Henning, 1983.

more who lived within 7 miles of the City of London.¹⁹⁸ From 1867, the **Second Reform Act** extended the franchise to those lodging in a property with an unfurnished value of £10 for at least 12 months, while the distance non-residents could live from London was increased to 25 miles.

11. Simplification followed in 1918, when the **Representation of the People Act 1918** gave the vote to men over 21 who were resident in a constituency or who occupied business premises worth more than £10 per annum. It was also extended to women over 30 who were wives, resident householders, or occupiers of businesses premises.
12. The 1918 Act also abolished the right of Liverymen as such to exercise the parliamentary franchise in the City but permitted those who possessed a business premises qualification to be entered on a separate list of Liverymen in the register of parliamentary electors, and to vote as Liverymen at Guildhall.
13. **The Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928** gave women the right to vote on the same basis as men, giving the vote to women over 21 years of age, while the **Representation of the People Act 1948** removed the right to vote in parliamentary elections from occupiers of business premises, confining it to residents. The **Representation of the People Act 1969** extended the franchise to those aged eighteen on the day of the relevant election.

Elections to the Court of Common Council

14. The first evidence in the City Corporation's archives of participation by representatives of the Commons of the City is suggested by the Oath of the Commune in 1193, which allowed the Mayor (himself first appearing in 1189) to summon 'worthy and substantial citizens' to assist in deciding civic matters. The earliest documented example dates to 1285, when 40 citizens were summoned.¹⁹⁹
15. In 1322 it was agreed that ordinances for the whole commonalty were to be made by an assembly consisting of two people elected from each ward, while in 1346 the number of representatives from each ward was laid down depending on the size of the ward.²⁰⁰
16. While the Common Council was, at times, chosen by the Livery and not the wards, from 1384 onwards it was elected by the ward electorate.²⁰¹ This electorate was formed of the freemen of the ward,²⁰² though nominations could be made by all male residents of the ward at the Wardmote.²⁰³
17. An Act of Common Council in 1692 stated that the election of Common Councilmen was restricted to Freemen householders paying 'scot and lot' (i.e. their share of local rates and taxes).

¹⁹⁸ Corporation of London Records Office, *Size of the City Electorates, 1725-1949*, 2001.

¹⁹⁹ London Metropolitan Archives, *Information Leaflet Number 13 – The Court of Common Council*, 2010.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Corporation of London Records Office, *Qualifications of Voters at Ward Elections*, 1975.

²⁰² Corporation of London Records Office, *The Franchise*, 1980.

²⁰³ Beatrice and Sidney Webb, *English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act*, 1908.

18. The **City Elections Act 1725** passed by Parliament confirmed these rights, providing for all Freemen who were householders with the right to vote in both Common Council and aldermanic elections.²⁰⁴ The houses had to be of an annual value of £10 and the householder to be the sole occupier. Partners in trade were all permitted to vote provided the house in which trade was carried on was worth as many ten pounds annually as there were partners. Two persons not being partners severally occupying a house who had each paid £10 annually might also vote.²⁰⁵
19. The **City of London Elections Act 1849** widened the property franchise to include occupiers of property rated at not less than £10 per annum, and required votes to be registered on the parliamentary register in order to vote at ward elections.
20. The **City of London Municipal Elections Act 1867** abolished the requirement of a ward voter to be a freeman of the City, ending the link between the Freedom and the municipal franchise which had been ended in respect of parliamentary elections over 30 years earlier. It enfranchised all those on the parliamentary register to vote at ward elections, and eased the restrictions on non-residents to vote in both municipal and parliamentary elections.²⁰⁶
21. The **City of London (Various Powers) Act 1949** enfranchised those on the parliamentary register under the 1948 Representation of the People Act by virtue of their residence in the City who would have been excluded by the property qualifications contained in the 1867 Municipal Elections Act. The property qualification for non-residents remained. The Act also restricted the ward franchise to British subjects, though the right to vote was extended to Irish citizens by the **City of London (Various Powers) Act 1950**.
22. These provisions were consolidated in the **City of London (Various Powers) Act 1957**, which applied the franchise to those occupying as owner or tenant any rateable land or premises in a ward of the yearly value of at least £10, and to British or Irish residents of the ward. The franchise was extended to those aged 18 or over by the **Representation of the People Act 1969**, to Commonwealth citizens by the **Representation of the People Act 1983**, and to EU citizens by the **Local Government Elections (Changes to the Franchise and Qualification of Members) Regulations 1995**.
23. In the present day, following the passage of the **City of London (Ward Elections) Act 2002**, eligible voters must be at least 18 years old and a citizen of the United Kingdom, or a Commonwealth country, and either:
 - A resident;
 - A sole trader, or a partner in an unlimited partnership, or;
 - An appointee of a qualifying body.

²⁰⁴ Corporation of London Records Office, *Size of the City Electorates, 1725-1949*, 2001.

²⁰⁵ Corporation of London Records Office, *Qualifications of Voters at Ward Elections*, 1975.

²⁰⁶ Corporation of London Records Office, *Size of the City Electorates, 1725-1949*, 2001.

24. Each body or organisation, whether unincorporated or incorporated, whose premises are within the City of London may appoint a number of voters based on the number of workers it employs. Limited liability partnerships fall into this category.

Elections to the Court of Aldermen

25. The position of Alderman first emerged in the 11th century, and the first recorded aldermanic election took place in 1249.²⁰⁷ At times in the fourteenth century, aldermen were elected annually, but from 1394 elections were for life.
26. Elections to the Court of Aldermen were initially held at the Wardmote, with direct elections by the freemen of the ward. From 1397, however, the Court of Aldermen took upon itself the right of appointment, with the ward electors able only to nominate two (and from 1402, four) candidates for the vacancy.²⁰⁸ The Court of Alderman chose from among these candidates, though claimed and exercised the right at times to veto all those proposed.²⁰⁹
27. This situation lasted until the 18th century, when the freemen ratepayers within a ward once again had the right of directly electing their alderman following the passage of the **1725 City Elections Act**.²¹⁰
28. From this point onwards, the franchise for aldermanic elections developed in parallel with the franchise for Common Council elections, as outlined in paragraphs 18 to 24 above.

Election of the Lord Mayor

29. The electorate for the mayoral elections evolved rapidly in its early history. The Charter of King John of 1215 granted the right of election of the mayor to “the barons of London”, though by the time that the first election is recorded in 1293, the “wealthier and wiser men” of each ward assembled to elect the mayor. In 1315 a writ issued by the King limited the election of the mayor to those summoned to attend, while by 1346, from six to twelve men were summoned to accompany each Alderman to the election, depending on the size of the ward. In 1384, it was explicitly stated that the members of Common Council together with other sufficient men of the City would be summoned for the election.²¹¹
30. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the electorate was formed of the Common Council, the Masters and Wardens of the Livery, and other “good men specifically summoned for the purpose.” By the later fifteenth century, it had been limited to the Masters, Wardens and Liverymen of the companies and to members of the Common Council. An **Act of Common Council of 1695** settled the method of calling Common Hall for the purposes of electing the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs and certain other officers,

²⁰⁷ Alfred Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, 1908.

²⁰⁸ History of Parliament Trust, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1386-1421*, ed. J.S. Roskell, L. Clark, C. Rawcliffe, 1993.

²⁰⁹ Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200-1500*, 2004.

²¹⁰ Beatrice and Sidney Webb, *English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act*, 1908.

²¹¹ Chris James, *Election to the Mayoralty*, 2006 (Black File Note).

and provided that “the election and choice of them shall be made by the Livery of the several Companies of this City in Common Hall assembled.”²¹²

31. Today, the electorate at Common Hall consists of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, Sheriffs and liverymen of at least a year’s standing.
32. With regard to the procedure, in early centuries it seems that the Aldermen chose the mayor for the proceeding year, with the choice approved by the Commonalty. By the later fourteenth century, the procedure had evolved so that the Commonalty nominated two “of the more sufficient and wiser persons of the City” to the Aldermen for their decision as to who should be the next mayor.²¹³ This has persisted to the present day, with those Aldermen who have served as Sheriff eligible for election (itself the custom since an Ordinance of Common Council of 1385).

James Edwards
Office of the City Remembrancer

²¹² Chris James, *Election to the Mayoralty*, 2006 (Black File Note).

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GLOSSARY

Almoner	Many livery companies and guilds, also the City Livery Club, have a volunteer almoner who keeps in touch with those members who are not well or otherwise distressed.
Apprentice	Originally an apprentice would sign what would probably be a 7-year term binding him/her to serve his/her master. He would learn the trade from his apprentice-master and at the end of his period of apprenticeship/servitude, would produce a “masterpiece” to show what he had learnt. He would also be entitled to apply to join the particular company. Nowadays, only a few companies have “real” apprentices, and the term is generally much shorter. It is a way of bringing in a young member, eg a son or daughter who, because of having been born before his parent became free of that company, is not entitled to join by patrimony.
Assistant	A person who sits on the court as a director of the livery or guild.
Beadle	The beadle is the name given to a person who these days might be described as a Master of Ceremonies. At court meetings, he will bring in the master, but takes no part in the meeting itself. If any new member is being presented to the court, he will bring that person in at the appropriate time. At lunches and dinners, he will oversee the smooth running of the event and make the appropriate announcements.
City Livery Club	A body which one can join once one has become a freeman or liveryman. It provides, inter alia, social gatherings across the livery, etc.
Clerk	The chief executive of the livery, company without livery, or guild – often works part-time. But some are very full-time as their company has a hall to maintain, many staff, and investments to manage. His/her badge of office will include crossed quills. An assistant clerk given a badge will be identified by one quill only.
Company without livery	This embraces two different styles of guilds. The first are two ancient companies which, for whatever reason, never sought or obtained livery – the Parish Clerks and the Watermen and Lightermen. The second are new guilds which have reached a certain stage in their progress to livery to be awarded the status of “company without livery” by the Aldermanic Court. As at January 2021, there are currently three companies without livery working towards livery, and two guilds working their way towards being companies without livery. A company without livery is not supposed to wear any of its identifying gowns in the street.
Clothed or Clothed in the Livery	This is the procedure whereby a freeman of a livery company, being also free of the City, is clothed in the specific clothing identifying that particular company, having paid whatever fine (if any) has been demanded. Once clothed, that person has become a liveryman.
Common Hall	The gathering of liverymen from across the livery at Guildhall (normally) on elections days - Midsummer Day (June 24) for election of the Sheriffs for the

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	ensuing year commencing 28th September, and Michaelmas Day (29 September) for the election of other civic officers. It is at this latter occasion that the Lord Mayor for the ensuing year (starting November) is identified. Some livery companies also hold their own Common Hall (general meeting) of their members – see also endnote 13.
Court	The board of the company. So-called because it used to be a company court similar to any other legal court where the officers could, for example, impose a fine for poor work, or settle disputes between members.
Fine	The sum paid to the company for, for example, undertaking the office of warden, or joining the court as an assistant, or for becoming a liveryman or freeman. The sums differ widely depending on the company concerned. The term no longer relates to the fines which used to be imposed on member traders for poor work, using incorrect weights or improper material, and so on.
Float	An entry in the Lord Mayor's Show. So-called because originally the Lord Mayor would often sail up river (he sometimes went on horseback) each year to Westminster Hall (where the judges were to be found). Others would follow, in gaily-caparisoned barges and other river boats.
Free of the City	<p>In the old days (pre-1835), this would give the (male) freeman rights as a citizen of the City to vote. Freedom also conferred the balance of the authority needed in order to be able to trade legally. Being free of a livery company or (these days) a City “company without livery” allows one to apply for the freedom of the City. (Women's rights to vote were dealt with via the 1918 and the 1928 Acts.)</p> <p>Since 1835 one no longer needs to be a member of a livery company or City guild in order to apply to be free of the City. Nor does one need the freedom in order to work, which had been the case hitherto.</p>
Freedom ceremony	To become free of the City, the mechanism is to take the relevant documents to Guildhall and to make an appointment. In due course, there will be a ceremony in the Chamberlain's Court, usually led by the clerk to the Chamberlain. Afterwards, one will be given a certificate, and also a little red book entitled <i>Rules for the Conduct of Life</i> first published in 1740. If applying for freedom as a result of having become a freeman of a livery company (or company without livery) the documents will include the company freedom certificate or other suitable document provided by the clerk to the company concerned.
Freeman, Freesister, Freewoman	A person who may be free of the City of London, or a paid-up freeman member of a livery company, or both. In the 21 st C this is usually freeman regardless of sex.
Great Twelve	These are the twelve companies who were the richest and had the most political clout at the date when the “order of precedence” was created by the Aldermanic Court in 1515. There were at that time 48 companies.
Guild	In general parlance, a guild is a society of those who work in the same trade/profession. Before 1835 it would be necessary to belong to a guild in many towns and cities in order to work and to learn one's skills.

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Guild of Freemen	Open to all freemen of the City of London, regardless of nationality, gender or religion, and their membership is drawn from all over the world, bound by a common interest in the City of London and the welfare and education of its citizens.
Guild of Young Freemen	A volunteer-run organisation made up of and run for and by young people – under 40 - who share an interest in the rich history and traditions of the City of London. To date more than 800 former young freemen have become masters, sheriffs, lord mayor, liverymen, company clerks.
Guildhall	The municipal building for the City. It is the ceremonial and administrative HQ of the City and its Corporation. The name is believed to come from the Anglo-Saxon gild for payment, being the place for the payment of taxes within the City. The Great Hall itself was completed in 1440 and, whilst it suffered some damage in the Great Fire and during the “Second Great Fire” (being the Luftwaffe raid on 29/30 December 1940) both of which caused the roof to be replaced, it is still used for all ceremonial occasions such as Common Hall.
Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America	This is an organisation for City Freemen who live in North America. It is run out of Toronto. Their website is https://www.freemenlondon.org
Ironbridge or Masters weekend	A weekend, normally in early June, when the current sheriffs, masters, prime wardens and upper bailiff are encouraged to attend a weekend originally always at Ironbridge. It had been held there since 1980 thanks to the encouragement of the then Lord Mayor Peter Gadsden. There are plans to have the June weekends in other venues around the UK which have special links to the City and the livery. Since lockdown, the weekends have been respectively in Sheffield (2022) and Glasgow (2023) London (2024), Aberdeen (2025) and 2026 is understood to be on or near the south coast.
Livery Committee	A forum for communication between the livery, the officers at Guildhall, and the Mansion House on any matter affecting the interests of the general body of livery. The committee issues regular briefings to the livery.
Liveryman, (Liverywoman)	A person who is more senior in the livery company than a freeman. A liveryman may vote at Common Hall for the election of sheriffs and other civic officers, including the Lord Mayor; and may in due course become as assistant on the court, a warden or master. The usual term for both male and females is liveryman.
Livery company	A company which is identified in the City by the gown its liverymen (usually these days restricted to court and officers) wears. Hence to become a liveryman one is ceremonially “clothed” with the gown in the style of the particular company. Many old companies acquired their status by lapse of time, others, and all the new liveries, acquire it by the permission of the Aldermanic Court. One of the liveries is not a company as such but a Society – the Apothecaries.

Livery Hall	Some companies have halls. Many of these are very old and are listed, such as the Goldsmiths, which have owned their site since the 1330s. Others are much more modern, such as Barber Surgeons which was bombed and rebuilt after WWII. They vary in size: eg the smallest Gunmakers can sit 24 people at a meal, whereas the largest. Plaisterers, can sit 400 (https://plaistererslivery.co.uk/plaisterers-hall/)
Lord Mayor's Show	An annual event, which currently takes place on the second Saturday in November. Over the aeons it has become a celebratory event and is the world's longest unrehearsed parade. The Lord Mayor is required by the terms of the Charter granted by King John in 1215 to show himself to the monarch or the monarch's representative (who by the time the parade started would be the Barons of the Exchequer (judges)). Originally the date was 29 October, but after the change in the calendar from Julian to Gregorian, the date became 9 November (11 days after), and was then fixed to the Saturday date in 1959. It was not stopped by either World Wars but was reluctantly cancelled as a street pageant due to the Covid 19 pandemic in November 2020. Since 1882, after the Law Courts in the Strand were opened, the Lord Mayor has always gone to the Law Courts to meet, and "show" himself to, the relevant judges in front of whom he takes the oath of allegiance.
Loving Cup	<p>The cup – usually two-handled with a lid - is traditionally filled with spiced wine, immemorially termed "Sack". The custom is said to have originated following the murder of King Edward the Martyr, who was stabbed while drinking at Corfe Castle on 18 March 978 (the murderer is much disputed). When a person rises to drink from the cup, the persons either side of him/her also stand. The drinker then bows to the neighbour to whom the cup will pass, who removes the cover with his right - or "dagger" - hand thus eliminating the risk of being stabbed. The other neighbour turns his back to the drinker's back ostensibly to protect him from attack from behind whilst drinking. Having drunk, the drinker wipes the place where he has drunk with the napkin, the lid is replaced and the drinker and his neighbour bow to one another before passing the cup. The first drinker then taps the person guarding his back (so that person knows he can sit down) and turns (some say he should turn keeping his back to the table whilst turning) to protect the second drinker from attack; it follows there are always three people on their feet, the drinker being in the middle. There are variants depending on the company concerned, but the principle remains the same. There is a wonderful cartoon by Bateman in <i>Punch</i> "The Man Who Drained the Loving Cup" which shows well how the three start the process.</p> <p>https://punch.photoshelter.com/image/I0000akGwhJS4bhw .</p> <p>Since the pandemic, many companies have replaced the liquid contents with wrapped chocolates. But alcohol is slowly seeping back.</p>
Mansion House	The official residence of the Lord Mayor. It was built between 1739 and 1752 and is Grade I listed. Its main banqueting hall is called the Egyptian Hall (because the architect Dance thought the arrangement of columns were Egyptian, due to Vitruvius, a classic Roman architect). There is a marvellous collection of Dutch and Flemish 17 th C paintings from the bequest of Harold Samuel. It is possible to organise tours there through the diary office. There are often tours on a Tuesday. It

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	is not, as such, open to the public. (Diary Office, Mansion House Walbrook, EC4N 8BH, or by phone 020 7626 2500). The nearest tube station is Bank , exit 8 (not Mansion House).
Master	One of the three general titles for the (usually) annually appointed chairman/president of the company.
Mother Company	The first company a person joins as a freeman.
Order of Precedence	In 1515, the Aldermanic Court took a decision to order the then companies (48) in terms of financial and political power. The top most powerful became known as the Great Twelve. All companies founded later are added in date order. Should any company amalgamate with another or close, those companies below move up a number. One of the earliest times this happened was when the Shearmen (who were then no 12) and the Fullers amalgamated in 1528 to become the Clothworkers.
Past Master	A person who has been master of the company concerned. If upper bailiff or prime warden the term is past upper bailiff or past prime warden.
Pathway	See Yeoman.
Patrimony	A person who is born after his or her parent became free of either the relevant livery company or the City or both is entitled to an easier mechanism of entry than a person who enters by redemption or servitude. Some companies have extended the right of patrimony to those born earlier and/or to members of the family generally.
Past Masters Association	The people who are masters in any one year tend to forge friendships which they wish to maintain. As a result, usually at a weekend gathering of masters normally held in June and often at Ironbridge (a tradition started in 1980 by the then Lord Mayor (Peter Gadsden)), the masters will determine whether they will create such an association, who will run it initially, and name it. Sometimes the consorts, who will have attended the weekend as well, will set up their own association, sometimes they are part of the masters' grouping. They tend to have names relevant to the year – for example the 350 th anniversary of the Great Fire in 2016 resulted in Phoenix and a consort group of Firebird. The 2017 group are Prime (because the year date is a prime number), and 2018 are the Spitfires. The 2022-23 group are the Caroleans. And so on.
Prime Warden	See Master.
Quarterage	The fee (usually paid annually) for membership of the company. Not all companies charge quarterage. Not all companies charge freeman. Most will charge liverymen.
Redemption	The mechanism of joining a livery company where one has no connexion via servitude or patrimony. There will usually be a requirement to have attended various company events, to be interviewed and to pay a (heavier) fine.

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Rose Bowl	Some companies will pass round a (usually) silver dish containing rosewater after the end of a meal. One takes one's napkin, dips the corner into the rosewater and pats it behind one's ears. This is said to stimulate the nerves in this region which through their connexions soothe the digestive organs.
Servitude	Undertaking an apprenticeship. These used usually to be seven years long. Today they vary but are unlikely to be that long. Once completed successfully, the former apprentice is entitled to join the company to become a freeman by servitude. There may be a fine to pay.
Silent Ceremony	The ceremony, in Guildhall, which takes place on the Friday before the second Saturday in November, at which the Lord/Lady Mayor receives the insignia of office from he/she about to step down. The only words spoken throughout are those of the new Lord/Lady Mayor when s/he gives his/her oath. It's a very impressive ceremony, though not seen to advantage by those sitting in the well of the Hall as their view is unfortunately blocked by the various officials who stand, as part of the ceremony, in front of the dais on which the ceremony takes place.
Sung Grace	<i>Laudi Spirituali</i> 1545: a grace used by many livery companies which is sung by those attending the function concerned at the end of the meal.
Swan Upping	The swans on the River Thames between Abingdon and Sunbury belong, since time immemorial, to a combination of the Sovereign, the Dyers and the Vintners. Each July, representatives of the three go Swan Upping in skiffs. Each time they find cygnets, they check them, and the parents, for their health, check who owns the parents and mark the cygnets accordingly (these days by rings). In the past the Sovereign's were unmarked and the Dyers' and the Vintners' had their beaks marked with one or two notches, as appropriate. Where the parents are owned by two different entities, their offspring are shared appropriately. (All other swans belong to the Crown.) Those upping wear ceremonial robes for the five days of the upping.
United Guilds Service	An annual service at St Paul's Cathedral. It was started following the Blitz in WWII and was designed to lift the spirits. The first service was on Lady Day (25 March) 1943. It is attended by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and representatives from all the livery companies and guilds. It unfortunately had to be cancelled, for the first and only time, in 2020 due to the pandemic.
Upper Bailiff	See Master.
Warden	One of the more common names given to officers on the court. In general, a warden is likely in due course to become master but it does not always follow as each company has its own method of choosing their master.
Worshipful Company	A term given to two ancient companies without livery (The Parish Clerks, and the Watermen and Lightermen) and to all livery companies – so that “The Worshipful Company of [.....]” is the same as the “The [.....] livery company” where livery has been granted ie not the Parish Clerks or the Waterman and Lightermen.. It is believed they are called “Worshipful” because of the strong religious links. Each

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	company has its own Patron Saint and its own church. For example the Plumbers have St Michael as their patron saint but because their church St Michael Crooked Lane was (in 1831) pulled down as part of the rebuilt London Bridge, they now use St Magnus the Martyr into whose parish their old church parish had been merged.
Yeoman	Usually applied these days to young people to encourage them to join on very reduced or no fees. Many yeomen are prize-winners in areas sponsored by the company concerned. Not all companies have them. There are other titles in other companies, such as the Environmental Cleaners which calls their equivalent "Pathway" members.

FOREWORD

TO THE 1ST EDITION

It's a privilege to be asked to write the foreword for this new paper on Women in the Civic City and Livery.

What started as a short research project in lockdown on the Lady Masters Association has turned into a comprehensive and informative paper on how the role of women in City Civic life has evolved since the Middle Ages.

It's easy to forget how quickly the livery has changed in this regard. In 1983, when the first female Lord Mayor, Dame Mary Donaldson was elected, more than half of the livery companies were not open to women on equal terms as men. At the turn of the millennium, more than a quarter still did not allow equal admittance. Now, at long last, in 2020, all City livery companies and guilds accept women on equal terms with men, making this a timely moment for this research paper to be published.

As the paper reminds us, women have had a long and significant impact in civic and livery life in the last thousand years. Many Medieval guilds were reliant on the skilled work of women and many buildings only came into the possession of the Livery or the City Corporation, such as the former Bricklayers Hall or Columbia Market, through acquisitions and donations from women.

Erica Stary has provided a valuable addition to the history of women in the livery and civic life. As she suggests, if this paper is updated in 2033, on the Golden Jubilee of Dame Mary's mayoral election, I am sure there will be many more accounts of the legacies of many more female masters, sheriffs and Lord Mayors. And I am sure the Lady Masters Association will have played a significant role in the success of more female masterships, shrievalties and mayoralties.

I hope readers enjoy the paper as much as I did.

The **Rt Hon the Lord Mayor** of the City of London
Alderman William Russell
January 2021