



The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers CITY OF LONDON

Master's Report for 2015-16

A Year to Remember

Today I complete my year as 19th Master of the Tax Advisers Livery Company and what a fantastic year!

My time as Master started on 21st September 2016 at the Installation Court followed by a service at St Bartholomew the Great and then our Installation Dinner. That marked the start of a hectic year which has been fabulously enjoyable, rewarding and life changing.

My year has been one of promoting the company across the City of London at various formal dinners, banquets, receptions, processions and a whole manner of events. In total, I have attended upwards of 150 events; usually accompanied by our Clerk, Paul Herbage, but also from time to time by my Upper Warden, Morag Loader and Beadle, Stephen Henderson.

At the outset, I would like to express heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in our livery company for the support and encouragement you have given me throughout my year. In particular I would like to thank my Clerk, Paul Herbage, my Beadle, Stephen Henderson and our Administrator, Ann Bailey. Without these three key people on the team a Master could not function. Furthermore, I have received great support from the Deputy Master, Anthony Thomas as well as other Past Masters. Everyone has always been ready to offer their advice and assistance whenever I needed it.

As Master of the company I am invited to many formal events, the more notable being the processions at Common Hall for the election of the Sheriffs and the election of Lord Mayor together with the annual United Guilds Service in St Pauls Cathedral. All are fabulous events and if you have never been to any of these I would strongly urge you to attend at least one over the next year.

The Tax Advisers are an active member of a Financial Services Group of Livery Companies, the 100+ Group of Livery Companies and the Modern Livery Companies. As such, my day to day contact with other Masters has tended to be with Masters from those particular groupings and I have made many new friends over the course of the year.

I'm often asked what has been the best event. It's a difficult question to answer as the whole year is special. One highlight has to be the Lord Mayor's State Banquet at Mansion House for all Livery Master's and Prime Wardens; a full on white tie event with state trumpeters and all the pomp and ceremony. Another notable event was the anniversary for the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists, 25 years of being a livery, who hosted a banquet for over 700 people at Guildhall.

Outings as Master were made the more enjoyable by the Civic Team. The Lord Mayor, Dr Andrew Parmley, together with his two Sheriffs, Peter Estlin and William Russell, have been a fabulous team to get to know at the various events I have attended.

All Masters and Prime Wardens are invited to a weekend gathering at Ironbridge which was another highlight. Not only did we tour the fabulous location and understand more about the Industrial Revolution, but we also formed our Master's Association to keep us all in touch with one another in years to come. We have badged ourselves the 2017 Prime Masters – we are not to be divided!

Other notable events were a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and lunch at the Old Bailey with the High Court Judges. At the end of the year I have memories of many occasions which will stay with me forever plus a very large box of memorabilia from invitations, table cards, plans, pour memoire, photos and even an Owl!

During the year our company continued our affiliations with the Services. Unfortunately, because HMS Bangor has been on active service in the Middle East and RAF 101 Squadron has also been involved in very active service we were not able to visit. I did, however, attend camp for the Army Cadet Force as well as a presentation to the St John Ambulance Cadets (Westminster Unit). Both events were an illustration of how the charitable donations our company makes can benefit the wider community. This was a theme I expanded upon at the Civic and Charities Lunch in June when we dined in the magnificent surroundings of Girdlers' Hall on probably one of the hottest days of the year.

Our Installation Dinner principal guest was Gary Millner from Bridge the Gap who gave an interesting speech on the work of both the Tax Aid and Tax Help for Older People charities. This was followed at our Budget Banquet by a completely different speaker, Phil de Glanville, the ex-England Rugby Union Captain. He delivered an interesting and witty speech looking at the parallels between the history of the England Rugby team and the Tax Advisers Company. At the Budget Banquet many of those attending also experienced, courtesy of the Master of the Worshipful Company of Tobacco Pipe Makers and Tobacco Blenders, the taking of snuff for the first time.

In July it was time for a day out to the seaside. The sun shone and the rain fell on my Masters Weekend, a visit to Southend on Sea. The event was a sell out and enjoyed by all.

My aim at the beginning of the year was to increase and improve communication with our members. I hope I leave office having achieved this objective. Over the year I introduced the concept of a quarterly newsletter to all members which included useful information in connection with the company and details of events – allowing members to book events much earlier than previously. I also made a point of publishing up to the minute news of my activities on our website. I hope both continue into future years and I am pleased that, as a result of this greater communication, the number of members attending various events has increased with many coming along perhaps for the first time in a long while.

I wish our new Master, Morag Loader, every success in her year. I'm sure she will enjoy every minute of it and I look forward to supporting her and the company into the future.

Kevin Thomas
September 2017