



The Worshipful
Company
of *Ironmongers*

ANNUAL REPORT 2024–2025



The Worshipful Company of Ironmongers is tenth in order of precedence amongst the Great XII livery companies of the City of London, incorporated under a royal charter of 1463.

Our links to the iron trade date back over seven centuries. As the iron industry gradually moved away from London over the course of the 16th century, the Company's association with the trade lessened.

Education and philanthropy are now key to our mission. In particular, we provide educational opportunities to children and young people in deprived areas where there are issues of low aspiration and academic under-achievement. We also support the promotion of STEM subjects at schools and universities, and fund heritage conservation and the commissioning of new works in iron and steel.

Our members enjoy each other's fellowship and actively give their time, talent and treasure to the Company and its Charities.

FRONT COVER IMAGE: Corten steel gate at Midlands Arts Centre. Read more on page 34.



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Foreword *from the Master*

RANDALL BODDY ESQ, MASTER



The Master with his family (left to right) Alice, Sarah, Randall, 'Mouse' and Harriet.

It is a huge honour and privilege to have been elected as Master for this year. Not only one of the Great XII, the Ironmongers' Company is a very special and friendly livery company.

A GREAT MANY guests and friends from across the livery movement comment on our reputation as a welcoming Company. So I am doubly proud, not only to be Master of livery company Number 10, but to have been elected to serve such a strong fellowship. My wife, Sarah, and I are looking forward to this year enormously.

Since Covid, and before that, seeing the City of London Corporation's interest in developing the Museum of London site (which included an option that threatened Ironmongers' Hall) I have watched with interest as the Company rallied around what is dear to us: the Hall and the Fellowship. It is clear that we want to stay in our home, use it extensively and leave it in a better state for future generations.

Out of the proposed redevelopment, we have considered serious plans for the future so that, when the opportunity arises, we can remodel the building and adapt it, 'fit for purpose' for the next 100 years. Our interests are being managed by Lord Garvagh and, through the work of Mike Lloyd and his Next Century Hall Working Group, the proposed changes and layout of the building are mapped out for the future.

The Company offers many ways for members to get involved. Look further through this report and you will see for yourself the wide variety of committees, activities, visits and sports that are on offer.

We have a friendly and active Livery and Yeomanry Committee. Its members are involved throughout the Company with a full and active diary, led by an enthusiastic chairman Oli Rose.

So, there it is: hand in hand, a valued and beautiful Hall we call home, full of engaged and interested members. This makes for a great fellowship, which will stand us in good stead for the future.

In response to our long-running operational deficit, two years ago under the Mastership of David Liming, the new business plan was introduced. As a result, all aspects of the Company's affairs have been (or are being) carefully reviewed.

Ensuring correct governance and a full financial review were part of this process. In the Below the Chair Committee, the Wardens and newer Court members work to streamline and coordinate long-term leadership thinking.

Membership fees were introduced as part of the business plan. The desired level of contribution has been achieved, and we are now in our second year of subscriptions. Through the Use of Hall Committee, chaired by Anthony Carter-Clout, the business affairs of the Hall have been under scrutiny to maximise its use and deliver the best commercial value. We have reviewed our long-term Hall maintenance programme and are getting that back on track. Because of the deficit, in the past larger maintenance items were often put on hold. This backlog is now scheduled to be dealt with.

The Hall teams led by Hall Manager Garry Timmins and General Manager Victoria Vronska, work together to great effect, delivering high-calibre services. Within the last 12 months the

Hall has hosted a staggering 295 events including weddings, conferences, dinners and filming among others. They have also served up nearly 12,000 delicious meals!

Attention is being applied to the recruitment of new members, with a focus on increasing the 'engaged' percentage of the membership. There is guidance for proposers and seconders to help them better to support and encourage new joiners.

Charitable giving remains a core activity. Last year we distributed over £1.1m to worthy causes: schools, communities, the application of iron and steel and STEM. I thank all members who give their time, talent and treasure to such good effect.

Geffery's Fields, our 52-bedroom almshouse in Basingstoke, is fully occupied. Under the care of Warden Jackie Lovell, it is a credit to the Company. I recommend that all members visit it and see for themselves the quality of the accommodation, and the delight of the residents who live there.

Sir Robert Geffery's School continues to thrive under Headteacher Edward O'Hara, and the chairman of trustees, Richard Twallin. It is an outstanding primary school for over 200 pupils in Landrake, Cornwall.

Through the pressure to correct the deficit, the desire of the Court to do it, the leadership to action it, and the diligent care of

the Clerk and his team to oversee it, much change has taken place. It is fantastic that we have undertaken these necessary reviews, and a report this September will show how we are performing. I would like to thank Charlie Knaggs, our Clerk, for overseeing all of this so efficiently and in such a positive manner, and his officers and staff who do such a great job.

This year marked the centenary of our hall. We celebrated in style, first with the 1920s-themed 'Salamander Ball' in May.

An exciting evening which included a silent auction, proceeds from which will help to fund the maintenance and upkeep of the Hall. Under the leadership of James Farquharson, many members and their families supported the event with planning and also, very generously, donated some marvellous auction prizes. Over 200 guests joined the party and great fun was had by all.

June saw the rededication and blessing of the Hall by the Bishop of London, The Right Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE. At the start of September we enjoyed a Beating Retreat by the Grenadier Guards in Guildhall Yard followed by the book launch of the new Company history at Ironmongers' Hall.

SO, WHAT IS NEXT?

The business plan, in due course, leads us out of deficit. We must build on our successes and learn as we go forward. Once we can make a steady surplus, we will distribute that to charity. So in the longer term we strive for a win-win position.

Finally, I would urge you all, DO NOT MISS OUT! Get involved, stay involved and be part of our friendship and fellowship.

Two speech bubbles containing the text: *Last year we distributed over £1.1 million to worthy causes.*

Message from the Immediate Past Master

EWAN WAUCHOPE ESQ, MASTER 2024–2025

This year has probably been most memorable for the Hall's centenary. The Salamander Ball and the dedication of the Centenary Stone, have been a superb way to celebrate this important milestone.

THE HALL, our home, remains central to what it is to be an Ironmonger, combined with our efforts to improve life chances for those in education and, via our almshouse, support those who need our help in old age. Our affiliations with the Grenadier Guards and local cadet forces goes from strength to strength as does our support for the Royal Navy via our recent affiliation with HMS *Venturer*. This year we signed the Armed Forces Covenant to further emphasise our commitment to continuing to support the services.

This year is also the second year of the business plan, and we continue to make the running of the Company efficient and transparent. There will be an update at the Annual General Meeting of the Livery and Yeomanry, but we remain on track to achieve the sound financial footing envisioned in the plan whilst also putting in place solid financial structures for preventative maintenance at both the Hall and at Geffery's Fields. The customary closure of the Hall in August has seen a good deal of work carried out to keep the Hall fit for purpose, and surely everyone has noticed the smart new Banqueting Hall chairs, which are not only more robust than those they replaced but are also designed to make storage, and usage, safer

and more efficient for the Hall team. Hall hire and use remains high and so it is vital all parts of the experience, from chairs to chandeliers, are properly maintained and fit for purpose.

Our charities continue their good works transforming lives. Our annual Head Teachers' Conference at the Hall was again a great success, and well attended by members of the Company who were able to hear at first hand the trials and tribulations of being a head teacher today. It also enables us to target our help where it's needed most. Each school has an allocated member of the Company to add a personal touch to their relationship with us, and to ensure we are helping them in the best possible way. We continue to encourage members of the Company to visit as many of the projects and individuals we support as possible. This not only allows us to ensure that

the money donated is having its maximum effect, but also allows us to evaluate whether we can do more to assist by better targeting our grants or changing our approach. I would urge members of the Company to get involved with these visits, as it's not just useful for the Company, it's a personally fulfilling way to see our charitable work in action, and, potentially, to ensure it's optimally focused. ✨



The Master with Zofia Wolny, winner of the Oxford materials science prize.





The Master with Polly the donkey at Sir Robert Geffery's School.

Message from the Immediate Past Master

✎ Education is at the centre of the Company's charitable efforts. This is emphasised each year to the Master Ironmonger, because one of the first activities in the calendar after Master's Day is a visit to Prize Giving Day at the Sir Robert Geffery's School in Landrake, Cornwall, to present the prizes. This wonderful event, an early challenge to the Master's speech-giving talents (it is necessary to keep children of many ages entertained), also emphasises how important it is that we are not entirely restricted to a London-centric outlook.

This year I have striven to make the Ironmongers and their charitable works more widely known, not just by the annual visit to the Royal Company of Merchants in Edinburgh, but by visiting Northern Ireland with the Honourable The Irish Society. Some of you may know that the City of London still owns the walls of Derry, and the Ironmongers' had an estate there, based around Aghadowey and Lizard Manor. The on-going charitable work of the Irish Society is less well-known, and I wanted particularly to see the projects the society runs today. It was important to get an idea of what we could do to help people there, and it was also an opportunity visit our old estate. Other livery companies have been involved in many of the charities in the region for some time, and have made a good deal of difference, especially during the Troubles — so perhaps we can assist there in the future.

At the other end of the education scale, we offer a prize for materials science at Oxford, and a highlight of my year as Master was to judge forty 12-minute talks from graduates at the Hume-Rothery Laboratory. As an utter science dunce, I was luckily accompanied by Professor Simon Stoddart and the

Clerk, who doubtless are both more gifted than me in this field. One of my criteria for choosing a winner was the speaker's ability to make me understand these high-level projects which often involve nanoscale testing and the use of multiple media. The winner, Zofia Wolny, spoke about her project dealing with electronic implants in the body and received her prize at the Court meeting in June. There were several inspiring talks and so we are hoping to invite runners up to the Hall on a future occasion.

Ironmongers' Great XII activities, such as sailing and skiing (started by George Bastin) continue to be great successes, much to the envy of fellow Great XII companies. Competition at both is fierce but friendly. This year I presented prizes at the sailing at Seaview and would urge Company members to attend if you can, as it's great fun. There are also golf, padel, croquet and shooting events where Ironmonger teams compete.

Looking back on my year as Master, there are so many I need thank. Colonel Charlie Knaggs, the Clerk, Catharine Melville, and all the staff at the Hall are probably sick of my 'Team, Team, Team' mantra unashamedly stolen from Denham Renham in *The IT Crowd*, but they have performed miracles from the Salamander Ball to Company events where more and more members take part. The Assistant Clerk, Kim Edmunds, has kept me on track, in the right place at the right time and well-supplied with oatcakes. Being Master is a great honour, and I hope I've discharged my duty as you all would expect.

We must all continue our efforts to leave our beloved Company to future generations in better shape than we found it.



Ewan Wauchope, Master Ironmonger, at the Guildhall, Derry, with Councillor Lilian Seenoi Barr, Mayor of Derry & Strabane, and representatives of a number of City of London livery companies.

THE MASTER



RANDALL BODDY
MASTER

Randall grew up in Hertfordshire, attending Berkhamsted School, then Nottingham University to read Agricultural Science, graduating in 1985. After university, he spent some time in practical farming to broaden his knowledge base and subsequently worked for a merchant business, Sidney C. Banks (Frontier) based near Peterborough.

From there, he took a more independent route with the British Cushion Supply Company and, in 1998, joined his future family, farming in Leicester. Under his management, this business has grown and is now a diverse agribusiness, principally involved in recycling food products into animal feed and food waste into green energy. In addition to this, it has an expanding property portfolio of four rural office business parks and light industrial units, and an arable farming estate.

In 2011, Randall started work on an anaerobic digester power generation plant, fuelled entirely by waste food. This was probably one of the first privately built commercial waste plants of its type in the UK, exporting 3.2 MW of green electrical power to the National Grid.

Randall is married to Sarah and they have three daughters: Alice, a biochemist from Nottingham University, now working in a specialist cheese dairy; Harriet, a full-time equine-event rider; and Millicent, in her final year at Oakham School. They live outside Leicester, along with 14 horses, four dogs and a cat!

Randall joined the Ironmongers' Company in 1993 by Patrimonial Redemption through his father Ashley Boddy, and progressed to Warden of the Livery and Yeomanry in 2010, and to the Court in 2012.

THE WARDENS



MATTHEW TILBURY
SENIOR WARDEN

Matthew attended Christ's Hospital in Horsham as a Presentee of the Ironmongers' Company. In his final year, he was Senior Drum Major of the marching band. He then studied Biochemistry at Imperial College, London, playing representative rugby and cricket.

After graduation, Matthew joined the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF). Initially within the Statistics department and then the IT department, both roles based in Guildford. He played rugby with the Old Blues RFC.

In 1995, Matthew moved to Denmark, finding various IT roles leveraging the internet's new possibilities. Whilst in Copenhagen, Matthew completed an executive MBA from Copenhagen Business School incorporating travel studies to Spain, USA and Mexico. He also learned Danish.

After returning to London, Matthew joined forces with some Danes to develop a 'design and build' website company, expanding it to include offices in London, Sydney, New York and Colombo.

Matthew married Laura at Ironmongers' Hall in 2017, and they live in Oxshott, Surrey, with their cockapoo, Rosie. When not 'Ironmongering', he is an enthusiastic golfer and clay shooter. He is a member of the Amicable Society of Blues, the oldest Christ's Hospital association, celebrating their appreciation of a 'C.H.' education since 1629.

Matthew joined the Ironmongers' Company aged 21 by Patrimony and progressed to the Court in 2015. He has served on many committees as a Liveryman and is a current Presentation Governor to an Ironmongers' Presentee at Christ's Hospital — the cycle continues...



PETER BODDY
JUNIOR WARDEN

Peter grew up in Hertfordshire, attending Berkhamsted School, then Leicester Polytechnic to read Economics, graduating in 1986. This was followed by 13 years at Allied Domecq in various roles within the Allied Breweries Division — selling beer, running pubs and large-format restaurants. During his time at Allied Breweries, Peter completed an MBA at Warwick Business School and his last role was managing director of The Big Steak Pub Co.

From this point, he has pursued an executive career leading businesses owned by private equity funds. Most notably Megabowl, Fitness First and Maxinutrition — focusing on profit optimisation, growth and exits.

Following the successful sale of Maxinutrition (2011) Peter has pursued a career as a non-executive director with roles at Daniel Thwaites, Hollywood Bowl plc (chairman) as well as other businesses within the leisure and hospitality sector. Current roles include chair at The Impact Food Group and chairman of Event UK. In addition to these roles, he has been a trustee of Oakham School.

Peter married Sarah in 1992, and they live in South Leicestershire. They have three children, Hannah (family lawyer), Phoebe (fine artist and food entrepreneur) and Henry (property investor) — all currently living in London. Both Hannah and Phoebe are getting married this year!

Peter joined the Ironmongers' Company in 1993 by Patrimonial Redemption through his father Ashley Boddy and progressed to Warden of the Livery and Yeomanry in 2011 and to the Court in 2023.

Message from the Clerk

COLONEL CHARLIE KNAGGS OBE

A year of progress where the staff focus has been consolidation and the implementation of the five-year business plan — coordinating the actions required for the Company better to address its key priorities: to increase the size, diversity and engagement of the membership; to address the operational deficit; and to secure Ironmongers' Hall as its home.

In parallel, and through three linked projects, the Ironmongers' Trust Company has launched a review of Ironmongers' Charities' governance, grant-making and the Company's relationship with its trade. A full report on the first year of the business plan will be presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Livery and Yeomanry but you will get a flavour of what you have achieved as you browse through the pages of this publication.

Recruitment into the freedom and progression to the Livery and onto the Court has been encouraging and it is so good to see 'Younger Mongers' from across the Company getting involved and making a difference. Membership subscriptions are working and the Master and Wardens are looking in detail at the P&L for every activity. We have just concluded a strategic review of the Company and Charities investment strategy and have renegotiated a three-year contract for the Hall hire and catering business with the Company of Cooks (CH&Co).

The Hall Plan for Preventative Maintenance (PPM) is in place and much work has been completed over the summer. Some key maintenance and capital projects have been completed whilst others are part of an ongoing wider programme. All activity is now part of a coordinated plan and the time, talent and treasure committed by the membership remains the vital catalyst and ingredient for success. As you reflect on those three Ts, an alternative might well apply — *Things Take Time!* That is not an excuse for complacency but more a reminder that we need to ensure that the plan works as much for our time as for future generations.

Belonging and giving should be a joy and there is evidence a-plenty of Ironmongers having fun in this Hall centenary year! A welcoming, fun-loving and seriously engaged Company — who wouldn't love being involved?

Your officers and staff have worked extremely hard to support the members and the Charities and I thank them for their hard work, patience and much-needed sense of humour in delivering the highest standards in support of a great cause. I would urge everyone involved, or wishing to become involved, in the works of the Ironmongers' Company to get on with it now! Get in touch and let us know how you are best able so to do.



IRONMONGERS make a difference through belonging and giving: each member helping to define an increasingly engaged and diverse fellowship, evolved over seven centuries and continuing to grow; every gift of time, talent or treasure a strand woven into the over-arching plan to ensure that following generations inherit a healthier Company that is fit for purpose.

A small team of officers and staff run the day-to-day business of the Company and the Ironmongers' Charities in support of members, committees, the Master and Wardens, and the Court. Teamwork and communication are vital factors in our successes.



To get involved please contact:
clerk@ironmongers.org

THE COURT AND COURT DEPUTIES



FRONT ROW:

R C R Twallin, R H Hunting, M S W Tilbury (Senior Warden), T R Boddy (Master), P A Boddy (Junior Warden), M J Crickmay, H J Charnaud

MIDDLE ROW:

C P H Knaggs (Clerk), The Lord Garvagh, A C Harris, J A Biles, K J Hughes, A M Carter-Clout, N H Moss, G A Bastin, T Doncaster (Finance Director), D J Worlidge, R P Slade, O G W Rose, G Timmins (Hall Manager)

BACK ROW:

Sir Peter Estlin, M P Lloyd, H S K Knowles, J E H Farquharson, R J Patteson-Knight, E D Wauchope, D J Liming

The Court functions as the governing body of the Ironmongers' Company. The Master chairs the Court and represents the Company at ceremonial occasions. The Senior and Junior Wardens assist the Master. Court Deputies are Liverymen who are seconded onto the Court for a limited period to take on specific projects in support of the Company's goals. The Warden of the Livery and Yeomanry provides a bridge between the Court and the Company's Liverymen and Freemen.

THE COURT

Randall Boddy Esq, Master
 Matthew Tilbury, Senior Warden
 Peter Boddy, Junior Warden
 Robert Stedall Esq, Senior Member (not pictured)
 Sir Michael Oliver Kt DL (not pictured)
 Richard Hunting Esq CBE
 Hugh Johnson Esq (not pictured)
 Samuel Apsley Esq (deceased)
 Timothy Oliver Esq (not pictured)
 Michael Crickmay Esq
 Richard Twallin Esq
 Jonathan Hudson Esq (not pictured)
 Harry Charnaud Esq
 Maj Gen Patrick Cordingley DSO OBE (not pictured)

Martin Hudson Esq (not pictured)
 Richard Patteson-Knight Esq
 Anthony Carter-Clout Esq
 George Bastin Esq
 David Worlidge Esq
 Richard Slade Esq KC
 The Rt Hon the Lord Garvagh
 John Biles Esq TD
 Andrew Wauchope Esq (not pictured)
 Julian Verden Esq (not pictured)
 David Liming Esq
 Ewan Wauchope Esq
 Hugh Knowles
 James Farquharson
 Alderman Sir Peter Estlin KStJ
 Kate Hughes

COURT DEPUTIES

Angela Harris
 Mike Lloyd
 Nicholas Moss
 Matthew Wilkinson (not pictured)

WARDEN OF THE LIVERY AND YEOMANRY

Oliver Rose

OFFICERS AND STAFF



FRONT ROW:

Jemeela Quraishi (Charities Manager), Helen Didymus-True (Communications Manager), Tatiana Doncaster (Finance Director), Charlie Knaggs (Clerk), Su Seager (Housekeeper), Catharine Melville (Social Secretary), Jackie Holmes (Cloakroom), Tina Stevens (Cloakroom)

BACK ROW:

James Liu (Houseman), Patrick Jenkins (Assistant Houseman), Michael Chapman (Event Sales Manager), Kim Edmunds (Assistant Clerk), Michel Salada (Hospitality Assistant), Ranjit Salian (Head Chef), Victoria Vronska (General Manager), Alessandro Iafrate (Sous Chef), Mandip Kumar (Kitchen Assistant), Andrzej Flizak (Hospitality Assistant), Alexandre Lima (Hospitality Assistant), Katy Tytler (Membership Manager), Michal Kaminski (Events Manager), Jonny Owen-Jones (Deputy Hall Manager), Garry Timmins (Hall Manager and Beadle).



The Clerk and his team are responsible for the organisation and administration of the Company and its activities. This includes the Company's charitable activities, finance, member engagement and events.

NEW STARTERS

James Liu, Houseman
Jonny Owen-Jones, Deputy Hall Manager
Jemeela Quraishi, Charities Manager
Alessandro Iafrate, Sous Chef, Company of Cooks

LEAVERS

Samuel Baracho, Deputy General Manager, Company of Cooks
Paula Renouf, Charities Manager

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE

HENRIETTA BRAILSFORD, LIVERYMAN

As a welcoming and friendly Company I am pleased to report that we have continued our commitment to improving diversity and inclusion over the last 12 months. One of our three top priorities, as stated in the Company business plan, is to increase the size, diversity and engagement of our membership. I thank every member who has supported this goal by engaging with our EDI work this year.

In September, Communications Manager Helen Didymus-True and I attended an EDI event with nearly 40 of our fellow livery companies. There were some excellent presentations regarding best practice from the Spectacle Makers and Entrepreneurs. We were pleased to find that in terms of our commitment, policy and road map we are definitely ahead of the drag curve.

The highlight was some excellent in-depth discussion regarding bystander training by Emma Bartlett, Partner at CM Murray LLP, including expert advice regarding how to diffuse uncomfortable situations that you might witness either at events or in public situations. She explained that members of certain professions (legal and financial services for example) can be suspended if observed, and then reported to their governing body, for behaviour which is judged to be unacceptable. We all have a role to play in ensuring that

everybody at the Hall — visitors, staff and members — feel comfortable and safe at all times.

This year, the proportion of new Freeman who are female has sadly reduced from 32% to 26% of the total intake. The Gender Balance Working Group has been established to address this. Any thoughts or ideas would be much appreciated, so do get in touch with Katy Tytler if you have ideas or are keen to assist.

We have been spotlighting highly engaged female Freeman and Liverymen to encourage new female member applications, as well as progression through the Company, on the basis that ‘you can’t be what you can’t see.’

Thank you to all who completed this year’s diversity monitoring survey. The report regarding the survey, and our progress over the last year, will be shared at the Livery and Yeomanry AGM in September and will be an interesting discussion point.

There has been excellent work this year in clarifying the process for proposing and seconding new Freeman, to encourage Ironmongers to invite a much wider range of people from their networks to consider joining the Company.

We are shortly to be signatories of the Livery Committee Diversity Charter. This closely aligns with our belief that attracting a wider pool of talent to engage with the Company will assist in building a City of London fit for the future.

Finally, in part inspired by the Livery Committee, we are working on our own Company EDI charter and will encourage all members to sign to demonstrate their commitment to making the Company a truly inclusive, welcoming place for everybody.

For a reminder of our policy and road map, Ironmongers are encouraged to visit the Policies and Guidelines resources in the Members’ Area of the website.

A hundred years of Ironmongers' Hall

THE COMPANY HAS OCCUPIED TWO SITES OVER ITS LONG HISTORY. THIS YEAR WE CELEBRATED ONE-HUNDRED YEARS AT OUR CURRENT HOME IN SHAFTESBURY PLACE.

A country house in the heart of the City of London, Ironmongers' Hall was purpose-built in the 1920s as the home of our great Company. Today, as well as accommodating the full range of the Ironmongers' formal and administrative activities, we play host to a wide range of private and corporate events. From weddings to business breakfasts, fashion photo shoots to birthday celebrations, the Hall provides a beautiful historic setting, outstanding catering and impeccable service.



**INTERESTED IN
HOLDING AN EVENT AT
IRONMONGERS' HALL?**

Get in touch at
events@ironmongers.org

Enchantment and achievement

VICTORIA VRONSKA, GENERAL MANAGER, COMPANY OF COOKS

From dazzling fantasy to real-world recognition, the Hall has been alive with laughter, energy and landmark occasions this year. Over the past 12 months, we've seen remarkable growth across every aspect of our events.





Delivering a magical 2025 events programme

Our events programme for 2025 has been our most ambitious and vibrant to date. From the earliest days of planning to the final applause of each evening, our team has worked tirelessly to deliver experiences that have delighted guests, pushed creative boundaries, and reinforced our position as one of the City's most unique and welcoming venues.

Mystic Fate: fantasy finds a home at the Hall

Perhaps no event better encapsulates the imagination and transformation we've seen this year than the Dark Enchantment Ball hosted by Mystic Fate, a period-themed fantasy ball that swept into the Hall in autumn 2024. With soaring banners, lush green foliage, and an abundance of flickering candlelight (LED of course), our spaces were utterly transformed. Guests arrived in fantasy-inspired regalia—think elven royalty and enchanted knights—bringing with them a palpable sense of wonder. The evening was a true collaboration between our events team, the production crew, and creative partners, and one that showcased our ability to reimagine tradition with flair and theatricality.

A centenary celebration: the Salamander Ball

May 2025 marked 100 years since the first dinner at the newly built Ironmongers' Hall—and we rose to the occasion delivering the Salamander Ball, a glittering celebration of the building's centenary. Channelling the glamour and decadence of the 1920s, a night of live music, Charleston dancers, entertainers and singers, coupled with Chef's period-inspired menu, brought the Twenties roaring back to life. The event honoured the Hall's rich history while embracing the spirit of revelry and spectacle. It was a privilege to celebrate this milestone with so many members and guests who continue to shape the Hall's legacy.

ABOVE: The Hall dressed for a centenary celebration; Alessandro at work in the Banqueting Hall.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Fantasy finery at the Dark Enchantment Ball.

Lights, camera, laughter: filming highlights at the Hall

We continue to delight in opening our doors to filming projects this year. Comic Relief filmed a spirited spoof of *The Traitors*, transforming our spaces into a dramatic, tongue-in-cheek competition set that had both cast and crew in fits of laughter. Additionally, we supported a major Warner Bros production with behind-the-scenes logistics—further testament to the versatility of our venue. These opportunities not only boost our profile but also help ensure the Hall continues to be part of contemporary storytelling and culture.

Team growth and well-earned recognition

Amid these major events and productions, we've also celebrated individual achievement within our team. We were especially pleased to promote our talented and dedicated Event Coordinator Nadia Hassan to the position of Event Executive. Nadia's creativity, reliability, and positive rapport with clients have been instrumental in the success of this year's events, and we're thrilled to see her continue to shine with us. We were also named as a finalist in the Best Livery Hall for Events category at the London Venue & Catering Awards 2025. Our core kitchen team has also seen a new addition. Meet Alessandro (pictured above), our newest sous chef, a passionate Italian whose career journey through hospitality kitchens has shaped him into a master of local, seasonal cuisine. With roots in traditional Italian cooking and a heart full of Mediterranean warmth, Alessandro brings a vibrant, cheerful energy to the kitchen. Known for his infectious smile and bubbly personality, Chef Alessandro doesn't just cook food—he creates joyful experiences around the table.

Looking forward with purpose and passion

As we reflect on this exceptional year, I am filled with pride—not just in what we have achieved, but in how we have done so: with warmth, precision and a genuine love of hospitality. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Master, Wardens and members of the Company for their ongoing support and trust. The energy in the Hall is palpable, and I look forward to building on this momentum into 2026 and beyond.

Whether through extravagant balls or meaningful community moments such as our Making Materials Matter conferences, we remain committed to ensuring Ironmongers' Hall is a place where heritage and creativity meet, and where every guest feels genuinely welcome.



One of many beautiful weddings that have taken place at Ironmongers' Hall this year.



A YEAR OF CELEBRATION AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

ANTHONY CARTER-CLOUT ESQ, MASTER 2014,
CHAIRMAN OF THE USE OF HALL COMMITTEE

This year, the Use of Hall Committee has concentrated on improving the presentation and ambience of the Hall to further support the marketing efforts of The Company of Cooks, our in-house caterers and marketing team, in order to grow the returns from the letting of the Hall. Under Michael Chapman, Sales and Marketing Manager, the team has achieved 116% of their budget for the year; indeed a welcome boost to defraying the costs of running our Hall.

The Hall Management team under Garry Timmins, and the Company of Cooks team under Victoria Vronska, have both been working closely together with Jacqui Brown, our Health and Safety Advisor, to make our Hall hire and catering business work effectively and efficiently and to make it a safe, secure and welcoming environment.

We have a new Deputy Hall Manager, Jonny Owen-Jones, who joined us in the autumn and who also sometimes acts as the Beadle at Company events. He does have a very loud voice!

We have made further progress with our Planned Preventative Maintenance programme which is being run for us by Chilton Associates, the Company's surveyors. This has included our electrical infrastructure and other potential opportunities presented by the City's London Wall West project for exploring how we can reduce the carbon emissions from our Hall. One example is the reduction of 24% in our gas usage that we have achieved since the new gas boilers and controls were installed last year.

The summer maintenance programme required careful planning to fit much work into a relatively short period, and to still allow for commercial events to be squeezed into the agenda.

We have also recently installed a new WiFi mesh network which will enhance internet coverage throughout the Hall. Other works over the summer included the replacement of the goods lifts and dumb waiters to improve efficiency. We have also rehung the chandeliers and added electric pulleys within the Banqueting Hall for easier maintenance and safer operation.

Our new stacking chairs arrived safely just in time for Christmas. These have been well received as they are both quite comfortable and ease the burden on the Hall Manager's team when a quick change around in the Banqueting Hall is needed.

We have introduced a projector on the ground floor to display information about the Company to visitors arriving for events. This also allows our clients to communicate any information they wish to convey to their guests. This has been a welcome addition to the Hall and a second projector has been installed on the first floor.

Our Hall reached its centenary in May this year and it was celebrated with a hugely successful fundraising event, the Salamander Ball, which was attended by over 200 members and their guests. This event showed great teamwork across all areas and showcased how versatile the Hall is when it comes to special events.

During June, a large number of Company members and their guests attended Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral and the Bishop of London then joined us at the Hall for a blessing. This included the unveiling of a memorial plaque and time capsule for the wall in the vestibule. The event was followed by a celebratory drinks reception and a speech by the Master, Ewan Wauchope.

On behalf of the Use of Hall Committee, our grateful thanks go to the Clerk and all the staff at Ironmongers' Hall for their hard work and dedication in keeping the Hall running smoothly, and for the warm welcome they always give to our members, guests and visitors.

Preparing for the future amidst City developments

MIKE LLOYD, COURT DEPUTY

As the City of London continues its extensive redevelopment plans the Next Century Hall Working Group has been actively navigating the ongoing negotiations, planning approvals, and long-term infrastructure goals to ensure the resilience and sustainability of the Hall through 2025 and beyond.

Deal progress and planning approval

A significant milestone has been reached with the agreement of heads of terms for a deal involving the Ironmongers' Company and the City of London with regards to the London Wall West project, which is set to substantially reconfigure the area surrounding the Hall. While the final details remain to be settled, the foundation of the agreement marks progress in shaping the Hall's future. Parallel to this, the City's own planning application for the project — submitted to itself — has received approval, subject to an ongoing judicial review which should close by the end of this year. Additionally, a Certificate of Immunity from Listing for Bastion House has been extended until November 2029, which means it must be demolished by then or risk being protected by listing. Together, these developments provide a clearer picture of the evolving landscape surrounding the Hall.

Securing infrastructure and access

As part of the negotiations between the City and the Ironmongers' Company, a three-year lease has been secured for the basement beneath the garden adjacent to the north of the Hall. This space is already being used for storage and car parking and will, in time, serve as a new service access route into the Hall's basement. This will replace the current route, which will become part of the City's new London Wall West development.

Environmental considerations and energy strategy

The Working Group has spent considerable time evaluating how to meet net-zero goals effectively. After thorough analysis, it was concluded that short- to medium-term installation of air source heat pumps is not economically viable due to both the high capital and operating costs — particularly the cost of electricity. In addition, planning restrictions which limit their operation between 11 pm and 7 am make them impractical for maintaining a consistent heating temperature overnight.

Nonetheless, we will continue monitoring technological and economic developments to determine the appropriate time for a transition to greener solutions.

Long-term maintenance and preservation

A comprehensive preventative maintenance programme has been mapped out, projecting approximately £7–8 million in works over the next 30 years. This plan addresses crucial upgrades to electrical wiring, water systems and general infrastructure to ensure the Hall remains functional and efficient for the next century.

Recent completed maintenance works include:

- Repainting of the main stairway following water damage
- Repointing and repairs to external wall pointing to prevent future ingress of rain water
- Approval and implementation of an upgraded integrated fire strategy focusing on better compartmentalisation throughout the Hall with improvements including upgraded fire doors.

BMS implementation and energy savings

The newly installed Building Management System (BMS) has revolutionised energy monitoring and management within the Hall. With remote access to control systems, the Hall Manager no longer needs to visit the basement every time there is a need to adjust heating or electrical settings. The results have been significant: a 24% reduction in gas consumption and a 16% improvement in electricity efficiency.

Utility infrastructure and resilience

Persistent issues with the Hall's electrical supply have prompted continued liaison with UK Power Networks to secure a stable and reliable electricity feed—though this remains technically outside the Company's direct responsibility it is critical to our operations and therefore something that we are keen to resolve.

Looking ahead: asset protection and upgrades

As major developments surrounding the Hall take shape, the Working Group is now looking towards the preparation of an Asset Protection Plan to safeguard the building during construction works related to London Wall West. Upcoming internal upgrade considerations include replacing the hot water calorifier (part of our water-heating system), modernising the audio-visual system and renewing the kitchen's ovens to maintain the Hall's high standards of service.

The work of the Next Century Hall Working Group continues with determination and foresight. From navigating the consequences of the City planning complexities to preparing the Hall for long-term sustainability, we remain committed to preserving our home's legacy and functionality well into the future.

A BUSY CENTENARY YEAR

GARRY TIMMINS, HALL MANAGER AND BEADLE

The year of Master Ewan Wauchope has been a year of change, learning and excitement, including centenary celebrations, growth and expansion. It's impossible to fit all that my team has done into this space, but I can provide an overview of all that has been achieved by the Hall management team this year.

Many occasions and external events have taken place, most notably the Dark Enchantment Ball where 400 fairies took over, creating a most wonderful world of potions, magic and mayhem.

City events came thick and fast, including the City Livery Lunch and the City Dinner, which saw the Lord Mayor Alistair King visit the Hall. The day of the Lord Mayor's Show was busy and full of good company, with many liveries and guilds making use of the Hall as their home for the day, ably supported by the team.

Jonny Owen-Jones joined the team as Deputy Hall Manager in December and was thrown into the deep end as Christmas functions took off. He has since gone on to receive his Events Institute of Safety Health Certificate. Jonny comes from both the security and hospitality world bringing a variety of skills that have been well employed in the past months including Under-Beadling duties for events.



The Hall Management Team.

Our biggest day was the Salamander Ball, celebrating the Hall's centenary in style. This major event required extensive preparation of the Hall with all hands on deck to create a functional and welcoming environment for Ironmongers and their guests. James Liu, Houseman, built temporary podiums for entertainers that held up to the task. Pat Jenkins (Assistant Houseman) and Jonny took on a multitude of tasks and dealt with the unforeseen in typically unruffled fashion! We set a record in the Hall on the day of the Ball, converting the Banqueting Hall from a dining room to a dance floor in just 30 minutes with all hands on deck, including those of the Social Secretary and the Clerk.

As the Hall Manager it falls within my remit to ensure the best possible security. This has been catered for in-house by Pat and

James for events that require a special element of home-grown talent. Jacquard Risk Management has proven to be a strong and competent attachment to security management for larger events in the past year, building in further layers of security where required.

Safety is top priority in the Hall and over 150 event risk assessments have been carried out this year, with the support of Health and Safety Advisor Jacqui Brown and the wider staff, to achieve consistently high standards.

Tina Stevens and Jackie Holmes have welcomed Emily Gordon to the cloakroom staff, and patrons have noticed the professional service and warm welcome on arrival at the Hall. This is a vital service that aids safety and security while creating a homely feel that is not easy to find in this day and age.

Cleanliness of all aspects of the Hall are performed by the Housekeeper Su Seager, supported by Pat and James. The team have created an amazing transformation in the last year, building on experience to achieve higher and higher standards and making the Hall a sparklingly clean home for the Company.

Adam Howard Williams (Houseman) has fixed, painted, cleaned and created throughout the year behind the scenes to ensure that the Hall continues to be a marvellous location for both Ironmongers' and external events. James has carried out amazing works throughout the year: his repair skills are second-to-none!

Pat, James and Jonny have supported Majestic Services in many ways throughout the Hall to enable facilities to operate at their highest standard. Billy Douglas and Graeme Jordan have supplied swift and competent service in times of emergency including fire, water, drains and electrics in the building.

The Hall could not operate without the expert support of our surveyors Chilton Associates who are a wealth of knowledge in the form of pre-planned maintenance, fire stopping and remediation, and the creation of an efficient and effective regime that has proved invaluable over the past year in prevention, mitigation and making the Hall a venue that can be relied upon.

For the Hall Manager it has been an amazing year, topped off by a wonderful centenary celebration evensong in St Paul's Cathedral. This year has made the team and I proud to be part of this ancient livery company. I also wish to thank the team at Company of Cooks: together we are an effective force for service in the Hall. And thanks to all the management team for support and assisting in making this a special place to work.

Our history reaches back over 700 years. The earliest records suggest that the Ironmongers, then known as Ferroners, were an effective body by 1300, when they took action against the smiths of the Wealds of Kent and Sussex over the quality of iron cart wheels in the City of London.

By 1328 they were firmly established, joining in the elections of City officials. The Ironmongers' Company received a grant of arms in 1455, which described it as the 'Honourable Crafte and Fellasship of Fraunchised Men of Ironmongers', and it obtained a charter of incorporation from Edward IV in 1463.

The Company suffered extortion under Henry VIII, Philip and Mary, and Charles I, and a similar attempt in 1684 under Charles II, which called into question the validity of the City's own charter and those of the livery companies generally. Although James II granted new charters to the City and its livery companies in 1685, these came too late and he fled the country. After the 'glorious revolution' of 1688, Judge George Jeffreys then permitted the Company to redeem its original charter. Since this time the livery companies have been left in relative peace.

Today, we are custodians not just of our Hall and its treasures, but of the heritage and history of our great Company. The Ironmongers' Archives holds a deed which dates from the 13th century, with other records surviving from 1455. Find out more by delving into the new history of the Ironmongers' Company by Dr Penelope Hunting, published this September, and also by checking the Archives page on the Company's website (ironmongers.org/archives).

Completing the new Hall in early 1925.

FROM PLANTATION TO PARTNERSHIP

EWAN WAUCHOPE ESQ, MASTER 2025, AND MIKE LLOYD, COURT DEPUTY



In 1610, as part of the Crown's initiative to stabilise and develop Ulster, King James I compelled the Great XII livery companies of the City of London to participate in the management of 'the Irish Plantation'.

Each livery company, with the support of a number of 'lesser' companies, was allocated a quota of lands to manage as part of the resettlement of the area around Derry, which was to be renamed 'Londonderry'. While this was presented at the time as a project of development, the plantation was also a colonial and deeply disruptive enterprise, displacing native Irish communities and imposing new structures of land ownership and control.

The Ironmongers' Company was granted approximately 13,000 acres along the River Bann in what became the Manor of Lizard. This vast estate encompassed five parishes and supported over 550 holdings at its peak. Centuries on, evidence of the Ironmongers' involvement in the region is available for all to see.

This year, the Ironmongers' Company paid two visits to Northern Ireland to learn more about our historic involvement in that territory. First, the Master joined representatives from various livery companies and the Honourable the Irish Society (the City of London's charity in Ulster) for a two-day tour,

which encompassed historical sites as well as charitable and community organisations.

At Draperstown the group met with Workspace, a social enterprise which has an incredible record of growing local businesses, mentoring local entrepreneurs, and using the profits generated to solve local problems and assist the local community.

Secondly, five members of the Company retraced the legacy of Ironmongers' historic Irish estate and explored the lasting cultural and historical significance of the livery companies' involvement in Northern Ireland.

A particularly memorable moment came during a visit to In Your Space, a community arts charity breathing new life into the former Cathedral School by teaching circus skills to local children, supported by the Honourable the Irish Society. The group was also warmly welcomed at Lizard Manor (once the home of the Company's agent) by its current owners.

Following these visits, and a deliberate re-engagement with this aspect of our history, the Company is investigating the possibility of providing charitable support in the region.

ABOVE: Detail of a stained-glass window at Derry Guildhall, commemorating the role of the Ironmongers' Company in the region.

1925–2025:

Celebrating a new Company history

BY DR PENELOPE HUNTING, HONORARY MEMBER, HISTORIAN AND
AUTHOR OF *THE IRONMONGERS' COMPANY: A HISTORY* (2025)

The Ironmongers' Company *A History*

Penelope Hunting



THE CLIMAX OF THE CELEBRATIONS MARKING THE CENTENARY OF IRONMONGERS' HALL, Shaftesbury Place, took place on Tuesday 9 September. The evening started with a spectacular Beating Retreat by the Grenadier Guards against the backdrop of the fifteenth-century Guildhall. Members and guests then meandered from Guildhall Yard to Ironmongers' Hall for a reception, supper and the launch of *The Ironmongers' Company: A History* by Penelope Hunting. At 432 pages with some 420 illustrations, this is an attractive volume, essential reading for members of the Company, and it would make a handsome gift for anybody interested in the history of London and the City livery companies.

There have been previous histories of the Ironmongers' Company (notably 1866 and 1991). This history is innovative and different, with a thematic approach that incorporates extensive research into City records, revealing that Ironmongers were influential in the government of the medieval City; they were also astute merchants trading in commodities that ranged from iron rods to silk. Gilbert Maghfled, Alderman and Sheriff, supplied the monks of Waltham Abbey with wine from France in the 1390s, and loaned money to King Richard II. Richard Marlow MP, the first Ironmonger Lord Mayor (1409), provisioned Henry V's army fighting in Normandy. Several Ironmongers moved in royal circles: Alderman William Dane and his wife, Margaret, sold linen to Queen Elizabeth I and exchanged precious gifts with the queen. The Danes were philanthropists and, like many other wealthy Ironmongers, left bequests which led to the foundation of schools, almshouses and other charities.

Not all Ironmongers were exemplary citizens. The avaricious Thomas Weston, who sponsored the voyage of the *Mayflower* in 1620 and was the first Ironmonger to set foot in the New World, established a colony of drunken, thieving settlers. He was condemned by the governor of Plymouth colony as 'a stain on Old England'. In 1642 Henry Walker threw a seditious pamphlet into the king's coach and was imprisoned, yet he served as Warden of the Yeomanry in 1674.

On the other hand, the gentle author, Izaak Walton, Warden of the Yeomanry (1637–39), and Sir Hugh Wyndham Bt, Master in 1638 and 1642, risked their lives for Charles II after the battle of Worcester in 1651. William Beckford MP, Master in 1753, Lord Mayor in 1762 and 1769, stirred up opposition to George III and led a march to confront the king in 1770.

Readers may relish biographies of their predecessors and ancestors, and will surely be intrigued by the evolution of the Ironmongers' Company from its origins as an informal fellowship based in Ironmonger Lane to its place as number 10 of the Great XII in 1517. The saga continues with chapters on 'Ironmongers' Halls', 'Property', 'Festivals, Feasts, Pageants and Barges', and the last of eleven chapters explores 'The Future of the Past'.



If you would like to buy a copy of the book, priced at £50 for members and £100 for non-members, please contact the Assistant Clerk at Ironmongers' Hall (emailing admin@ironmongers.org). We would be grateful if members could collect their copies from the Hall; in exceptional cases copies might be posted for an extra cost.



This stone was laid by Ewan Wauchope, Master, to celebrate the Centenary of the opening of this hall in Shaftesbury Place in June 1925.

The stone was blessed on 17th day of June 2025 by the Bishop of London in a ceremony attended by members of the Company followed by a dinner in the hall.

Master — Ewan Wauchope

Wardens — Thomas Randall Boddy, Matthew Shaw Wylie Tilbury

Clerk — Colonel Charles Knaggs OBE

Preserving our heritage

ROBERT STEDALL ESQ, MASTER 1989, CHAIRMAN OF THE HERITAGE COMMITTEE

During 2024/25, the most important activity of the Heritage Committee and, of course, of Justine Taylor, our Archivist, has been the production of the new Company History written by Dr Penelope Hunting. On page 22–23, Penny explains how she approached the writing of her magnificent history.

With the text largely compiled, the past year has been spent in sourcing images — mainly undertaken by Justine — who has also guided the designer, Ian Denning. Ian also designed our previous book, *One Hundred Treasures of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers*, published in 2016, and the objective has been to provide a published volume of similar quality. The new history went to print as the culmination of Trojan work by numerous members of the Company, and was delivered in time for the launch on 9 September 2025. It can rightly be seen as a magnificent achievement by all those who have been painstakingly involved in supporting Penny's scholarship.

I am proud to have played a small part in guiding this process, which has also involved raising the magnificent sum of £48,185 from individual sponsors. Together with the proceeds of sales of copies to be offered to other members at £50, and external purchasers at £100 per copy, the sponsors' generosity has enabled us to produce this new volume without burdening the Company's resources. As I said at the outset, this is a gift from current members of the Company to future generations. To this end we have arranged to print 750 copies so that they can be offered to new members on joining once supplies of Elizabeth Glover's history (published in 1991) have been exhausted.

A second painstaking and time-consuming task undertaken by the Beadle and his team has been the cleaning of the Company's silver which is now gleaming. Justine and Catharine Melville have provided labels and display stands for the important pieces on display at dinners to make them a talking point and to explain their origins. We still plan to provide small card captions for other silver items in the display cabinets.

We have cleaned the portraits in the Banqueting Hall and have greatly improved the lighting of the pictures in the Court Room and the Luncheon Room, as well as the Gainsborough on the landing. Lighting has additionally been extended to provide



back lights for all the stained-glass windows in the lower corridor, showing off the quality of the glass installed here. Other repairs include the Master's and Wardens' badges, scheduled to be undertaken this summer. We also hope that the Elizabethan Chest can be moved back onto its

plinth after being moved by a film crew; this will probably call for some brawn from some weight-bearing Younger Mongers.

We have offered support for those providing articles and books on the Hall and the Company, particularly the recent article by John Goodall for *Country Life* (25 June 2025 issue) and a contribution to *City Unlocked*, a book on the City's livery companies, published by Profile Books in July.

Another big issue that has arisen is the proposal from the London Archives (LA) to move all the livery company archives that it cares for, including most of the Ironmongers' Archives, from their current storage at the Guildhall Library to LA storage at its premises in Clerkenwell. The LA also plans to increase considerably our storage fees and this still needs some negotiation. Although it is a less convenient location for researchers, it does make sense for these records to be consolidated in the short term at the Clerkenwell site. We have been advised by the LA that it is seeking a more convenient location in the City for all its holdings when its lease expires in 10 years' time and we hope that the Ironmongers' Company and the other livery companies affected will help and encourage the LA to persuade the Corporation that livery company archives should be kept within the City of London.

Finally, Mike Lloyd and Ewan Wauchope write on page 21 about two trips to County Londonderry and the livery company 'proportions'. The highlight was a visit to Lizard Manor, once the home of the Company's agent in Northern Ireland, followed by lunch with Dan Calley. As a result, Dan, whose elderly father-in-law owns the Manor, has been invited to become a member of the Company.



ABOVE: The Goldney Cup, presented to the Company by the Master, Thomas Goldney, to celebrate the opening of Ironmongers' Hall in June 1925.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The charter granted by Edward IV in 1463.



FORGED IN IRON AND TRADITION:

A CENTURY OF IRONMONGERS' HALL, 1925–2025

MIKE LLOYD, COURT DEPUTY

For the past 100 years Ironmongers' Hall in Shaftesbury Place has stood as a testament to the enduring traditions of the City of London's livery companies. Completed in 1925, the Hall is a relatively young addition to the City's built fabric, yet in its hundred years, it has become an emblem of continuity amidst change—a building both reflective of architectural revivalism and a crucible for evolving social identity.

ABOVE: Auxiliary Fire Service members tending wartime allotments on a bombsite near the Hall in 1942. Soil was brought in from Hampstead Heath to make the ground usable.

Less than 15 years from its completion, the Second World War brought with it an unprecedented architectural rupture in the life of the City of London. The first signals of this were the requisitioning of the Banqueting Hall and the Drawing Room by the military authorities in 1939, with the Company adopting the 5th (Hackney) Battalion, the Royal Berkshire Regiment, whose Colours (as the 10th London Regiment) are still displayed in the Banqueting Hall.

From 1940 to 1941, the German Luftwaffe conducted sustained bombing raids on London and while Ironmongers' Hall itself sustained only minor damage, its surrounding urban context was virtually obliterated. The building thus became an unintended relic of a lost landscape, standing amid acres of hollowed masonry and scorched foundations.

The Cripplegate Ward, immediately to the east of the Hall, was one of the most intensely bombed areas of the City. Nearly every structure around the

Hall was either destroyed or severely damaged during the night raids of 29 December 1940: a date later dubbed the 'Second Great Fire of London.'

During these raids, incendiary bombs blanketed the area. St Giles Cripplegate, Goldsmiths' Hall and most of the surrounding Georgian and Victorian streets were gutted. In contrast, the Ironmongers' Hall, though shaken and scarred, remained structurally intact—its thick masonry walls and restrained height likely contributing to its survival. Damage was concentrated on the roof, where the asphalt was melted, windows fell out, and the internal finishes, particularly in the Banqueting Hall, were damaged as sparks and burning debris were blown into the Hall through the heraldic stained glass, part of which had been blown out by shockwaves. The lead pipes on the Hall melted and the molten lead then blocked the drains. Stirrup pumps were taken up and water pumped onto the roof and window frames in order to cool the building.



ABOVE: The Hall following an air raid on 24 August 1940 and the Company's air-raid wardens.

In the aftermath, the Hall stood amid a surreal void: a lone Tudor Revival landmark among acres of bomb sites and temporary fencing. For more than two decades following the war, much of the Cripplegate area remained undeveloped. The Hall, which had once been nestled within a dense network of commercial and residential blocks, now occupied an island-like position.

The devastation of the area, however, opened the way for one of the most ambitious post-war redevelopment schemes in British urban history: the Barbican Centre. In 1951, the City of London Corporation initiated proposals to rehouse the displaced Cripplegate population and revitalise the bombed site through a mixed-use cultural and residential complex. Architects Powell and Moya were commissioned to develop the master plan, and over the next two decades they conceived the now-iconic Barbican Estate and Arts Centre—a Brutalist megastructure rising directly adjacent to Ironmongers' Hall.

The Hall's very survival presented both a challenge and an opportunity to the planners. After the City Corporation, wanting a site for the planned Museum of London, had served a surprise compulsory purchase order on the Hall on 19 May 1966, the Company successfully fought the order through the services of the Company Surveyor, Jack Nardacchia. A public enquiry took place over four days and finally, in August 1967, it was decided by the minister for housing and local government that the Hall should stay, overturning the decision of the enquiry. It would not therefore be absorbed into the new urban grid; instead, it would remain an historic enclave within the new plan, surrounded by the concrete podiums, elevated walkways, and angular forms of the Museum of London and the Barbican.

By 1974 the Company was again thinking about its financial position and considered replacing the Hall with a modern building incorporating a smaller banqueting hall and offices for letting. At the time an office-development permit was required before a contract could be undertaken and such a permit was not issued until a named tenant had been agreed. After a long delay a firm of stockbrokers was identified to lease the new building but, on the day its acceptance was received, office-development permits were stopped on the grounds of

oversupply in the City. The development could not go ahead, and the Hall was saved again!

After making the decision not to replace the Hall, the Company agreed to build and let a small office building, Ferroners House, on adjacent land as proposed by the Company's Surveyor Jack Nardacchia. He also managed a substantial refurbishment of the Hall which took place from 1977–79. This included replacing the old bedrooms in the Great Garret with an office, currently leased to the Hatching Dragons nursery. The kitchens and cloakrooms were modernised, new wiring and an improved lift, as well as central heating, were installed. The Cloisters around the Fountain Court were turned into offices and a new apartment was created for the Clerk.

In the 21st century, the architectural stewardship of the Hall has continued with meticulous care. Conservation architects have overseen the integration of climate-control systems, accessibility improvements, and discreet IT and fire-safety infrastructure, all without compromising the building's historical fabric. Recognised with its Grade-II listing in 2023 the Hall now comes under the oversight of Historic England.

The Hall's preserved interiors are often studied as exemplars of revivalist interior architecture and it is frequently cited in architectural guides as a case study in early 20th-century historicism. The building's details, such as its hand-carved oak panels, plaster strapwork ceilings and bespoke iron hardware, are preserved in near-original condition, making it a rare surviving example of Arts and Crafts-informed Tudor Revival in a corporate-civic setting.

The Hall can be seen by people well beyond the Ironmongers' membership when it opens its doors for corporate events booked via the Company of Cooks (CH & Co) team and for those attending the Monday Luncheon Club, open to members of other livery companies and their guests.

As Ironmongers' Hall enters its second century, it does so not merely as a preserved relic of the past, but as a living institution: one that has wielded its architecture to communicate values, to preserve a unique identity and to offer a stable counter-narrative to London's continual reinvention. It is, fittingly, a Hall forged in iron and tradition—strong in memory and stronger still in adaptation.

A fellowship of giving

Every Ironmonger joins the Company because they want to belong to a fellowship of like-minded people who continue our centuries-old tradition of giving. From the start, our members are encouraged to contribute their time, talent or treasure where they can have the most impact. This might mean sitting on one of our grant-giving committees, visiting one of our beneficiary organisations in order to see the impact of our grants or volunteering their time and expertise.

Giving has always been at the heart of the Company's identity: linking our rich history to our ongoing purpose and vision for a sustainable future. The Company acts as trustee for six registered charities. Five of these were established in the early 1700s, thanks to the generosity of Ironmongers such as Margaret Dane, Sir Robert Geffery and Thomas Betton. The sixth, the Ironmongers' Foundation, was created in 1963 as the Quincentenary Fund, marking 500 years since the Company received its royal charter in 1463.

Sir Robert Geffery's Trust originated from his will following his death in 1704. Entrusted to the Company for administration, this endowment continues to support almshouses in Basingstoke and a primary school in Landrake, Cornwall — Sir Robert's birthplace. A proportion of the trust's income is reserved for the relief of those in need.

Thomas Betton's 1725 bequest is now overseen by the Betton's and Appeals Committee, which has absorbed a host of other bequests including Margaret Dane's. It provides funding for Church of England primary schools, awards scholarships

to allow talented pupils to meet their full academic potential, and supports charities that aid disadvantaged children and young people. Originally, the trust's funds were split between paying ransoms for European sailors and merchants captured in Turkey and North Africa and funding Church of England schools. While most of the captives fund has since been redirected toward education, a small portion remains as the 'redemption fund'. Recently, interest from this fund has been used to make modest annual donations to a charity that helps victims of modern slavery.

The Iron Committee continues to uphold the Company's historical roots in iron and steel by supporting university students conducting research in materials sciences, promoting traditional blacksmithing techniques, and backing the restoration and creation of ironwork.

Finally, the Ironmongers' Foundation collaborates with partner organisations to deliver STEM initiatives that inspire young people to engage with science at school and pursue further education or training in engineering-related fields.

47

charities and
organisations
supported

10

heritage works in
iron and steel
funded

5

new works in
iron and steel
funded

2.9k

state primary
school pupils
supported

15

pupils studying on
Ironmongers'
scholarships

7

STEM grants to
universities

Over **£1.5m** given
in grants and support

£928k
Almshouses

£320k
Communities

£163k
Schools

£97k
STEM

£30k
Iron Committee

£506k
grants given

BETTON'S SCHOOLS: MARKING 20 YEARS OF SUPPORT

DAVID WORLIDGE, MASTER 2016, CHAIRMAN OF THE BETTON'S AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

Approximately 36% of our giving through the Betton's and Appeals Committee ('Betton's') is directed to support six pupils at Christ's Hospital in Horsham, one pupil at King Edward's School in Witley, two choristers at St Paul's Cathedral School and especially our nine partner CofE primary schools, all in deprived areas of England.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of our relationship with five of the nine CofE schools that we support today. In 2004 Hugh Johnson (Master 1998 and the then chairman of Betton's) and Helen Sant (the then Charities Manager) approached the Church of England to ask if it could provide a list of its schools in deprived areas of England that the Betton's Educational Trust could potentially support.

After making numerous visits, five schools were selected including St John's CE Primary School near Durham, where David Liming has acted as our Ironmonger contact from the inception of our relationship with the school. He has visited the school every year for the past 20 years—a wonderful effort given that when he took on the role he worked nearby but then moved south to London soon afterwards. Thank you David!

All our partner schools have a similar Ironmonger contact who visits the school annually and provides a report to the committee of their visit and thoughts on how effectively our grant has been spent. I would also like to extend my thanks to all those contacts who give up so much time to keep these vital links going.

During 2024/25 we were fortunate to generate additional unbudgeted income in the Betton's Trust so we took the decision to increase the £9,000 annual grant to each school to £14,000 on a one-off basis.

A further 32% of our giving through Betton's is directed to support relief in need for disadvantaged children up to

the age of 25. Grants are made twice a year and, in recent years, we have been receiving up to 400 applications for each grant cycle. This has resulted in a huge amount of work for Ruth Eglesfield, our Charities Assistant, whittling the applications down to about 30 for consideration at the 'Appeals Shortlisting' meeting.

During 2024/25, grants totalling £164,425 were made to 30 charities, ranging from dance and creative sessions for three- to 15-year-olds with profound learning disabilities in Catford, to creative after-school workshops for 12–16-year-olds who are referred from mental-health teams in Bradford. Our aim is to visit all these charities that make such a difference to young people's lives—if any Ironmonger wishes to help Betton's by making one of these visits please contact Katy Tytler.

We also have four charity partners with whom we have longstanding relationships (Lyric Theatre, St Vincent's, Island Trust and MakeBelieve Arts) and these account for 16% of our giving. During 2024, St Vincent's suffered an unexpected cash crisis. At the time we provided a non-binding letter of support for the charity stating that we would be prepared to continue our annual grant. I am pleased to report that the crisis now seems to have passed and St Vincent's is back to providing valuable support to vulnerable families in Westminster.

The total grants given by Betton's during the 2024/25 year amounted to £506,027.

Berkshire Vision

This year we funded two outdoor experiences designed by charity Berkshire Vision to encourage independence in visually impaired children. Twenty-five children took part in these activities, 15 as part of a residential trip. Of these, 64% reported increased confidence. The children made their own breakfasts and lunches and helped to prepare evening meals, developing invaluable life skills and independence. Participants reported improved confidence, new life and social skills and improved wellbeing. They also had a lot of fun! One parent said: 'I very much liked how Berkshire Vision encouraged all the children to try things they enjoyed and things they perhaps would not naturally choose.'



HONOURING A LEGACY:

A REMARKABLE YEAR AT SIR ROBERT GEFFERY'S SCHOOL

RICHARD TWALLIN ESQ, MASTER 2006, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, SIR ROBERT GEFFERY'S SCHOOL, LANDRAKE



Each academic year at Sir Robert Geffery's School (SRGS) is unique. The 2025 year was especially so, in that the Master was unable to present the prizes at Speech Day because of a long-standing family commitment. He kindly arranged for the Senior Warden to deputise for him and offered to present the prizes next year, to which we all much look forward. Everyone at the school greatly appreciated the visit of the Senior Warden, who shook the hand of every member of the school, several times for those who received multiple awards, and probably established a new handshaking record as a result!

In his introductory speech the Senior Warden reminded us of Sir Robert's successful career and his subsequent bequest, more than 320 years ago, leaving a sum of money so that a schoolmaster could teach the children of poor families in Landrake how to read and write and to give them religious instruction. The seed which he planted has evolved into a state-funded Primary Academy providing high-quality education for more than 200 pupils.

The scope of teaching has of course gone beyond Sir Robert's original vision and comprises the full primary school curriculum and numerous extracurricular pursuits, including music and sport. Results of Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), both at Key Stage 1 (seven-year-olds) and Key Stage 2 (eleven-year-olds), were excellent, comfortably exceeding national averages. These achievements are a tribute to the hard work of the children and the skills of the really exceptional team led by inspirational head teacher, Mr Ed O'Hara. As trustees, charged with realising Sir Robert's wishes, the Ironmongers' Company owes the team an enormous debt of gratitude and I personally have the greatest admiration for all of them and the work that they do.

Speech Day, which takes place just before the end of the summer term, not only recognises academic achievements but is also an opportunity to showcase the pupils' other talents. The morning included performances by each year group, the school wind orchestra and singing group, all of which were very impressive and entertaining.

The school farm, in an area adjacent to the school grounds, is another unique feature. As well as looking after guinea pigs, chickens, sheep and a donkey the children grow fruit and vegetables; and linking the work they do on the farm with the curriculum strengthens their maths and cookery skills.

Sir Robert also required the children to receive religious instruction. The school is one of many Church of England schools overseen by Truro Diocese; and the school's website demonstrates how Christian values are embedded in school life. The way in which the children understand the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself is particularly impressive. It is evident to the staff and governors that the children look after one another as well as those in the local community. ✨



I enjoy orchestra because I love to play the saxophone, especially with my classmates. I also really like to perform at speech day in front of my peers. My favourite thing about orchestra is the music we play because the music is really catchy and nice. Overall playing the saxophone is really relaxing. At speech day this makes me really proud of myself."

CHARLIE, YEAR 6

✦ A report on the school website shows how the Year 6 children helped at the Landrake village community lunch last Christmas, serving food and drinks, chatting to the villagers and making sure that everyone enjoyed themselves.

This attribute was further evident from the Year 6 group's visit to Ironmongers' Hall in May as part of their week in London. We were given a short tour of St Paul's Cathedral, attended Evensong and then had supper in the Banqueting Hall. Several of the talented musicians entertained us on the piano before the whole group spent the night in the Hall.

The birth rate in the UK is experiencing a significant decline which is reducing the number of applications to primary schools in Devon and Cornwall. SRGS has to compete with other local primary schools in order to maintain our pupil numbers on which the funding we receive from Cornwall Council is based. The School is fortunate in that we can offer children extracurricular opportunities such as music and the work of the farm, which are not generally available at other schools. This is made possible by the additional funding we receive from Sir Robert Geffery's Trust and the Ironmongers' Foundation, for which we are very grateful. The governors are delighted that the 2025–26 Reception class is full which is excellent news and reflects the hard work of the team.

We are all looking forward to the coming academic year and continuing to deliver the vision which Sir Robert set out all those years ago.



I really enjoyed the Year 5 residential to Barton Hall, because there were so many different activities I could do with my friends. Archery and the zip-wire were my favourite activities. It is magnificent to do something I can't do at home.

OSCAR, YEAR 5



CASE STUDY

BY KATY TYTLER,
MEMBERSHIP MANAGER



ABOVE: Year 9 children enjoying Swansea University's Discovery Engineering Festival.

Aimed at engaging students before they choose their GCSEs, Swansea University's 'Discover Engineering Festival' highlighted the challenge of raising awareness about materials science: something few 13-year-olds had even heard of. Centred on the theme of 'A Sustainable Future', students rotated through three workshops led by research associates from the Materials Science Department.

In the first session, students worked in teams to design and build sustainable structures using upcycled materials. Their creations were then tested against wind, rain and earthquakes—with much laughter (and water) involved. In the second session, they learned how energy generates heat by building circuits to warm their own coasters. The third explored the circular economy, using car manufacturing to discuss product life cycles.

While the excitement of a day out of school was clear, it was inspiring to see how the professors connected with the students. Highlights included a hands-on lab experience—apparently once a *Doctor Who* set—and the frantic creativity of students trying to build a house in five minutes. 'You can't build a house in five minutes!' one cried—too true.

Above all, the day fostered team-building, curiosity and encouragement, ensuring every student left having gained something valuable.

RAISING ASPIRATIONS AND INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS

JULIAN VERDEN ESQ, MASTER 2022, CHAIRMAN OF THE IRONMONGERS' FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

I want first to sincerely thank my predecessor Harry Charnaud for his continued support. Harry's sustained interest in, and dedication to, the work of the Ironmongers' Foundation Committee (IFC) is truly invaluable, and has been deeply appreciated this year.

Enormous thanks also to Paula Renouf, who left her role as Charities Manager on Master's Day. Her commitment was top-rate, and she will be missed. We welcome Paula's successor Jemeela Quraishi, who is already making the role her own.

Funded by the generous donations of Ironmongers past and present, the Ironmongers' Foundation continues to expand its essential support for STEM education. It also ensures that our two other Ironmonger Charities (administered by the Iron Sub-Committee and the Betton's and Appeals Committee) benefit from our collective giving. Through this, the Company is able to fulfil its charitable objectives: advancing education, supporting the iron industry, and providing relief to those in need. None of this would be possible without the ongoing generosity of our members, for which I am enormously grateful. Let's keep on giving please!

Making Materials Matter

In May I enjoyed a fantastic day at Ironmongers' Hall for the relaunch of our Making Materials Matter (MMM) programme. A STEM outreach programme, funded by the IFC, MMM inspires the next generation of materials scientists and engineers.

This programme was first launched in the 2010s, but was sadly stymied by the pandemic. I am delighted to be able to say that it has been comprehensively rekindled this year, ably supported by our members including Dr Tabitha Jones and Nicholas Joinson, two past winners of the Ironmongers' Oxford Medal for Materials Science.

Groups of schoolchildren were matched up with Oxford PhD student mentors. On the day of the launch, they learned how to engineer sustainable and attractive protective cases for raw eggs. These were then dropped from the Minstrels' Gallery in the Banqueting Hall by the Master, to a soundtrack of cheers and groans.

The participants will enjoy sustained engagement over the next two years: the programme aims to enrich the science curriculum for those involved, raising their aspirations to pursue further study of the physical sciences. More Making Materials Matter events are planned in the coming months.

Getting out there

Thank you to every member who has been out to visit our beneficiaries this year. Harry Charnaud showed the Company's support at Work-wise's Getting up to Speed event in Sheffield in March. A live STEM careers showcase which aims to introduce, inform and inspire students, parents and teachers, we are proud to be a flagship sponsor of the event.

Katy Tytler visited the Materials Science department at Swansea University, where our grant funded an outreach programme for over 200 Year 9 pupils in the surrounding area (see case study opposite).

See our impact for yourself

A call to all Ironmongers: the work of the IFC is funded by the long-term generosity of our fellowship, and I really do encourage you to get out and see for yourself the impact that we're having. If you can spare a few hours to visit one of the organisations we support, we will prepare and equip you to make the most of the opportunity. You will have the honour of representing the Company and the pleasure of getting to connect, in a real way, with the beneficiaries of our grants. Please contact Katy Tytler to be matched with a suitable organisation.

And finally, if you are in the position to leave a legacy that will benefit the Ironmongers' Foundation, I encourage you to consider doing so. Your continued support through generous donations is vital to our work. Giving is the thread that unites our past, present and future. Make yourself a part of this longstanding Ironmonger tradition!

ABOVE: Year 8 children learning about Materials Science from their PhD student mentors at Ironmongers' Hall.



Investing in talent and tradition

JULIAN VERDEN ESQ, MASTER 2022, CHAIRMAN OF THE IRON SUB-COMMITTEE
(PART OF THE IRONMONGERS' FOUNDATION COMMITTEE)

The good work this Sub-Committee does could not go ahead without the tireless support of our small and dedicated Charities team. Thanks first to Paula Renouf, who retired from her role as Charities Manager on Master's Day, and welcome to Jemeela Quraishi who has hit the ground running as Paula's replacement. Thanks also to Charities Assistant Ruth Eglesfield, whose work sifting through our grant applications makes the final shortlisting process much easier for all of us.

The work of the Iron Sub-Committee has two core strands: supporting early career researchers and practitioners in STEM and ferrous metals, and funding new and heritage works in iron and steel.

Encouraging young talent

In June, the Master presented the Oxford Medal to Zofia Wolny. The medal is an annual prize, given for the best presentation on a Materials Science Part II project. Zofia's talk 'Biodegradable

Metallic-Collagen Composites for Implantable Electronic Systems' explained her fascinating research into temporary, biodegradable medical implants that can be harmlessly broken down by the body once they've done their job, reducing the need for further surgery.

Another enormously talented young researcher, Ellie Abel, was one of a number of winners of grants from the Company to support her summer research project at Imperial College London last year. A driven undergraduate with a passion for inspiring the next generation of STEM enthusiasts, Ellie's energy and expertise have impressed many of my fellow Ironmongers.

I must also congratulate Bradley Abrahams, winner of the Ironmongers' Best Student Award at the Institute of Cast Metal Engineers' Awards and Fellows' lunch. Keen to learn and with an enthusiasm for the industry, since completing his level-3 apprenticeship he has already won praise from his managers at West Midlands-based Castings PLC and has been promoted to foreman with a supervisory role, responsible for overseeing colleagues who are much older than him. Reliable and tenacious, his company are sure Bradley has a bright future in the foundry industry.

We are proud to support and encourage talented young people like Zofia, Ellie and Bradley early on in their careers. It is always so heartening to see them go on to succeed, often choosing to join us as a Scholar or Freeman in order to promote the fascinating world of STEM education and careers to the next generation of children and young people.

Iron and steel in the community

I am particularly pleased that we are able to grant funding to Dulwich Picture Gallery's 'A Gift of Flowers' steel sculpture this year. Winner of the Gallery's 'Reimagining Play' competition, this vibrant, playful installation (pictured below) transforms Jan van Huysum's *Vase with Flowers* (part of the Gallery's collection) into a striking, interactive sculpture. Designed to invite climbing, sliding and resting, and fostering connections between art, nature and community, the design was shaped through engagement workshops with local families, and will be a truly accessible addition to the gardens when it is installed in 2026.

Last year, we also awarded a grant to the Midlands Arts Centre to design and install a Corten steel gate for their outdoor theatre. The original gate was functional but uninspiring; the new gate is a beautiful transformation which will welcome theatre-goers, as well as attendees at community events, for years to come.

We have also agreed to fund the repainting of the hull of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's *ss Great Britain* (see case study).

Funding projects like these brings our Company's proud heritage in iron and steel into local communities, elevates the visual appeal of the spaces in which they're installed and offers an enduring and weather-resistant option for outdoor environments.

I must extend my sincere thanks to all members of the Iron Sub-Committee, and to those who have visited beneficiaries of our grants this year. Getting out to see the impact of our giving is fundamental to your experience of being an Ironmonger — please do contact Katy Tytler, who will find a suitable organisation for you to visit.



ABOVE: Artist's impression of *A Gift of Flowers*, a playful new steel sculpture for Dulwich Picture Gallery's gardens, supported by grant funding from the Ironmongers' Foundation.



CASE STUDY BY PAULA RENOUF, CHARITIES MANAGER



The *SS Great Britain*, once the world's largest and most technologically advanced passenger steamship (1845–1853), was the first iron steamer to cross the Atlantic, completing the journey from Bristol to New York in just 14 days. Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the ship also transported immigrants to Australia before being retired to the Falkland Islands, where it served as a warehouse, quarantine ship and coal hulk.

In 1970, Sir Jack Hayward funded the ship's recovery and return to Bristol, where it was restored in its original dry dock as a visitor attraction. The vessel's preservation is complex due to its rolled wrought-iron hull. A glass plate divides the ship at the waterline: below it, the hull is protected by a dehumidification system; above, a three-layer specialist paint system guards against rust, rain, and UV damage.

Our grant will fund an overdue repaint. The *SS Great Britain* charity has conducted extensive trials to determine the best method for removing old paint without damaging the hull. After testing materials such as crushed walnut shells, glass beads and aluminium oxide, a blend of fine glass and aluminium oxide was selected for its effectiveness and compatibility with spray equipment.

This place truly is home

RICHARD PATTESON-KNIGHT, MASTER 2013, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOMES COMMITTEE

Not everyone is successful in provisioning for the autumn and winter years of their life through savings and pensions. Almshouses have long played a critical role in providing affordable and secure housing for the elderly, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds. The origins of almshouses date back to medieval times when religious institutions and charitable benefactors established such buildings to provide shelter for the poor, sick, and elderly. Almshouses have historically been places of refuge and dignity.



At the VE Day celebrations and Geffery's Fields in the sunshine.



Today, almshouses continue to form a significant part of social housing provision for older people, offering a unique combination of affordability, community support and security. The demand for suitable elderly housing continues to grow. In the UK alone, the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to double by 2050. With increasing pressure on local authorities to provide housing for an aging population, almshouses remain a vital alternative to public-sector social housing and private-sector options.

Almshouses provide an essential alternative to private rented accommodation, which is often too expensive for pensioners on low incomes. Unlike traditional social housing, almshouses are typically run by charitable trusts, meaning that rents are significantly lower than market rates. With the onset of the Renters' Rights Bill, it is likely that the stock of private rented accommodation will diminish further, thus reducing security of tenure while pushing up rents. Almshouses provide a secure tenure, often for life, reducing the risk of homelessness among older people. Fifteen new residents have moved into Geffery's Fields since July 2024, and there are ten potential residents on the waiting list.

A significant advantage of almshouses over other forms of elderly housing is the strong sense of community they foster. Geffery's Fields provides communal spaces including gardens and lounges for social interaction. Support networks grow naturally, where residents look out for one another. Activities and social events reduce loneliness and isolation, which are major challenges among the elderly. This aspect of community living makes almshouses an attractive option for those who wish to remain independent while still having access to social support. Geffery's Fields has an excellent reputation locally for accessible and modern accommodation and a safe, friendly environment, where the Robert Geffery's Almshouse Trust takes interest in the quality of residents' lives.

There is considerable effort to ensure the residents feel part of the community. Our wonderful Warden, Jackie, is available during normal office hours to help residents. The fact she lives on site adds to the sense of comfort and security. The Court, the Homes Committee and members of the Company take a close interest in 'the Homes'. Ian Tennant, his wife and I attended the Geffery's Fields VE day celebrations. Seventy-two people (both members of the Court and residents) attended the Court visit to the Homes and lunch in May. Twenty-seven residents had come to Ironmongers' Hall for lunch on 18 March. For many, this was their first time of visiting the home of the Ironmongers.

The Homes Committee is always looking at how it can better harness the membership's desire to 'get involved' with the Company's portfolio of charitable works. We are working out the details of a resident 'befriending' scheme which includes reaching out to a resident occasionally and possibly meeting for tea/lunch (either when residents visit the Hall or when the Court visits the Homes). This is to have a very light touch, but it is an idea for the residents' life enrichment. The Homes Committee will be developing this idea over the summer, and subject to approval by the Ironmongers' Trust Company, we hope to involve the Livery and Yeomanry in this project.



I can honestly say it was a day I'll never forget. The Banqueting Hall was so very beautiful, the meal was fantastic, and [the Ironmongers I met were] so very caring, as were all the staff, and you should be very proud.

GEFFERY'S FIELDS RESIDENT

FINDING GEFFERY'S FIELDS

Mo's story



When I came to Geffery's Fields, it was a real relief. My son and I had lost money after trusting someone who let us down. I moved in with a friend, but when she moved out, I was left paying double rent. The next place I found was too expensive, and I knew I couldn't stay long.

Time was running out, so I went to the council. The first person told me I'd have to rent a room in someone's house. I was in my 70s and thought, 'So this is what it's come to.' But later I saw someone else, who handed me a leaflet: 'Have you heard of Geffery's Fields?' she said. It was exactly what I needed.

I had two weeks to find somewhere, came here quickly, and was offered a flat straight away. I was so grateful. It's peaceful, central and I've got my independence. My son's nearby, doing well, and that hard time is behind us.

I've lived here ten years and never felt so safe. There's company if you want it, and privacy if you don't.

I run the social club with Leslie — bingo, barbecues, celebrations. Jackie, our Warden, is incredible. And the Ironmongers? They treat us like family.

This place truly is home.



Twenty-seven residents of Geffery's Fields attended a lunch at Ironmongers' Hall on 18 March.



The bond between the livery companies and the British Armed Forces has endured for generations. The Company is a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant, a promise to ensure that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.



HMS *Venturer* passing under the Forth Bridge during her 'floating off'.

In medieval times, England's monarchs would call upon the livery companies of the City of London to provide men and provisions for the City's security. These soldiers were responsible for defending the City and patrolling its wards.

The livery companies also supported the Crown in a range of military campaigns. For example, various companies were called upon to provide funds for Henry V's army at the battle of Agincourt in 1415.

Today, the Ironmongers' Company is honoured to be affiliated to the Grenadier Guards and to contribute to its 'Colonel's Fund', which supports all grenadiers (and their families) who have been affected by serious injury or disability.

We present the Ironmongers' Millennium Prize to a student officer on the Advanced Command Staff Course at the Joint Services Combined and Staff College, Shrivenham.

We are also proud to be affiliated with HMS *Venturer*, the first of the Royal Navy's Inspiration Class Type-31 Frigates. We provide grants to the London Sea Cadets and the North-East Sector and City of London Army Cadet Force to support young people of all backgrounds to participate fully in the cadet experience.



HMS *Venturer*: naval innovation anchored by strong affiliations

MIKE LLOYD, COURT DEPUTY

The Ironmongers' Company's affiliate warship HMS *Venturer*, the Royal Navy's first Type-31 'Inspiration Class' frigate, has made significant strides over the past 12 months — from structural completion to initial float-off — marking a new chapter in modern naval capability.

Constructed at Babcock's Rosyth facility in Scotland, *Venturer* left the build hall in May 2025, revealing the sleek, 139-metre silhouette that will soon carry the UK's flag across the globe. A month later, she was transferred via a submersible barge and towed up the River Forth, a landmark moment that formally concluded her structural build and ushered in the fitting-out phase.

HMS *Venturer* has also established a strong network of affiliations that signal her place not just in the Royal Navy, but in the wider national community.

Civic and ceremonial affiliations

HMS *Venturer*'s affiliation with the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers reflects a long-standing link between the Royal Navy and the City's maritime-supporting institutions.

Further significant civic partnerships for *Venturer* affiliations are with the county of Essex and the town of Hartlepool. As a coastal community with deep maritime roots, Hartlepool's connection to HMS *Venturer* strengthens the bond between the Navy and the north-east of England.

ABOVE: A bespoke bell hanger designed and made by Freeman Oliver Russell, commissioned by the Company to house the ship's bell from the previous HMS *Venturer*, a Second World War submarine.

Royal patronage

At the national level, HMS *Venturer* enjoys a prestigious royal connection. Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal was announced as the ship's sponsor in early 2024. The princess's role as sponsor will see her preside over key ceremonial moments, including the ship's official naming and commissioning, in 2026 and 2027 respectively.

Looking ahead

While its social foundations are strengthening, HMS *Venturer* is also progressing rapidly toward operational readiness. The ship is being outfitted with advanced sensors, Sea Ceptor missiles and future-proofed systems designed to accommodate upgrades such as the Mark 41 Vertical Launching System.

To reflect the special relationship between the Ironmongers and HMS *Venturer*, the Company has commissioned a bespoke hanging system to house the ship's bell rescued from the previous HMS *Venturer* (a Second World War submarine) and generously donated by the family of the captain of that vessel, Captain Jimmy Launders DSO DSC RN. The bell hanger will be housed in the wardroom of the ship with the bell used for ceremonial and other special occasions.

AN ENDURING AFFILIATION

HADLEY NEWMAN, LIVERYMAN

Each year, the Hall plays host to an event that quietly but powerfully reinforces one of the Company's most valued affiliations: the reception and supper for Nijmegen Company, Grenadier Guards.



Now well established in our annual calendar, the dinner is not ceremonial in the usual sense. It is neither grand nor performative. Its strength lies in its informality. In the space of a single evening, guardsmen and Ironmongers meet not as representatives of distant institutions, but as people, sharing stories, good food and mutual respect. This year's event brought together serving members of Nijmegen Company, a number of Ironmongers, many with long-standing military links, and a growing group of younger Ironmongers keen to understand more about the British Army.

The value of this gathering has never been in question. For the guardsmen, it offers a brief and welcome contrast to routine. It acknowledges their service and creates a connection to the City and to the enduring traditions of a livery company. For the Ironmongers, it is a rare opportunity to engage with soldiers who are, in many cases, only relatively recently out of training, yet already serving at the heart of the Regiment's public and operational duties. Few evenings offer such a direct line to the lived experience of the modern Army.

That engagement matters. As a Company, our affiliation with the Grenadier Guards is longstanding, and Nijmegen Company has been at the centre of that relationship since the beginning. Over the past decade, Ironmongers have joined guardsmen on the ranges in Aldershot, observed field training in Kenya and Belize,

and welcomed soldiers and their families to the Hall. A small number of serving Grenadiers have even joined the Company. But it is the supper each year that has become the most dependable expression of that relationship. It is simple, regular, and deeply human.

The relationship has practical consequence too. Each year, the Ironmongers make a financial contribution to the Colonel's Fund, the Regiment's charity that supports wounded Grenadiers, bereaved families and veterans in need. The fund's impact is quiet but critical, and our ongoing support is a tangible way to give back to those who serve.

As in previous years, the supper brought out what we value in this relationship: candid conversations, shared stories, and the renewal of ties between soldier and civilian. Whether discussing ceremonial duties on the forecourt of Buckingham Palace, deployments abroad or life in barracks, the guardsmen spoke with openness and good humour. Many of the Ironmongers in attendance commented on how much they had learnt about the role of Nijmegen Company, about the realities of modern soldiering and about the Regiment's history.

These exchanges are not mere formalities. They create mutual understanding. They foster connection. They help ensure that our affiliation with the Grenadier Guards remains active, visible and relevant.

Supporting the next generation of Sea Cadets

COMMANDER JAMES NISBET,
VOLUNTEER RESERVES ROYAL NAVY,
LONDON AREA OFFICER FOR
THE SEA CADETS

The Ironmongers' Company has a longstanding relationship with the London Area Sea Cadets, and has provided a grant towards our activities again this year.

Sea Cadets continues to change lives for our young people and the support provided through the Ironmongers' Company is greatly appreciated. The confidence and leadership experience in particular are highly valued, with cadets often discovering skills that they were unaware they had.



Being an Able Cadet now at 15, I'm very proud of how far I've come and I am so grateful for the experiences, friendships and opportunities that Sea Cadets have given me. I've learned to lead with integrity, show respect, stay disciplined and be loyal to my team. These values have shaped how I act and work with others both in the cadets and in everyday life.

— AC EMILY

A fellowship *like no other*

An Ironmongers' membership is like no other. Every Ironmonger is part of a fun, active and engaged community. We work together to translate our history and experience into future opportunities that deliver sustainable social change.





Welcoming, inclusive and increasingly diverse, we are a fellowship that is committed to making a difference through the Company and its Charities.

Our members join to belong and to give. As custodians of the Company, they also strive to leave it in a better position for the next generation of Ironmongers.

Over 400 members are actively engaged in running the Company, supporting its Charities and participating in an array of different social events. Ironmongers are well-regarded for our sporting activities and we organise a number of events with other livery companies across the UK and overseas. This includes the Inter-Livery Ski Championships in Mayrhofen, Austria, and the Great XII Sailing Challenge on the Isle of Wight.

Eleventh place never looked so good

RAFAEL STEINMETZ LEFFA, FREEMAN

The Younger Mongers' quiz team placed a respectable 11th out of 24 teams in this year's Young Inter-Livery Quiz, hosted by the Drapers' Company and organised by the Guild of Young Freemen.

Representing the Company were Jacqueline Chan, George Godfrey, Nicholas Joinson, Izzy Pelling, Rafael Steinmetz Leffa and Eliza Wauchope. The quiz tested knowledge across topics from history to geography, with a few near misses — most notably swapping the correct answer 'Saudi Arabia' for 'United States' on a question about British arms exports, and misidentifying Johannes Gutenberg as Galileo Galilei.

The team had their moments of triumph too, including solving a tricky anagram ('Apothecaries') and correctly answering a question on Indonesian population growth.

Finishing mid-table proved to be a strategic success — winners are tasked with organising next year's event. This year's honours went to *The Dractuaries*, a combined team from the Drapers and the Actuaries. Runners-up were the Guild of Young Freemen's Deputy Clerk's Team, with third place going to *At 5s and 6s!*, a joint team from the Goldsmiths and Merchant Taylors.

ABOVE: The Younger Mongers' quiz team (left to right) — Eliza Wauchope, Nicholas Joinson, Izzy Pelling, George Godfrey, Rafael Steinmetz Leffa and Jacqueline Chan.



An ABC of the Livery and Yeomanry

OLI ROSE, WARDEN OF THE LIVERY AND YEOMANRY



What a stellar year for the Company it has been. The Livery and Yeomanry Committee has been busy and we've had more engagement than ever before by you, the Company membership. Whether you attended one event, or twenty, thank you for being involved. Last year, I stood before the Livery and Yeomanry AGM, outlining priorities being as simple as ABC: *admissions*, *building* the Company, *celebrating* the centenary.

ABOVE: Melanie and Oliver Rose (Warden of the Livery & Yeomanry) with daughter Albie, and Isla Cooper (Warden 2023) and Khushru Cooper (Warden 2024) with daughter Yara.

Admissions

We've continued to assist the Admissions Committee, helping bring members into the Company, and we'll hit, and likely exceed, our 20-member target. This year we saw particular success with prospective joiners at the Curry and Quiz Night (thanks to Rupert Goodall as my co-host) and the Summer BBQ.

The mainstay of the Livery and Yeomanry's calendar is our monthly drinks, either at the Hall or a local pub. I challenge each one of you to attend at least two of these in the coming year. They are brilliant, regularly attracting over 20 attendees: a mixture of Court and Livery and Yeomanry members, and new and prospective Freemen.

Building the Company

Engagement has been incredible this year. We've run a beginners' shooting day, paraded in the Lord Mayor's Show, driven sheep across Southwark Bridge, organised wine and cheese tastings and vineyard visits, and slept out in the Guildhall Yard for charity.

The L&Y Fund is a sizeable pot, created by the great work of the Great XII Regatta and Inter-livery Skiing. We want all members to feel empowered to use the money available. We already subsidise events like the Inter-Livery Shooting, the Guild of Young Freeman Quiz, Inter-Livery Padel, and many of our own events, to keep prices accessible. In the next year, look out for more information about how to better access these funds.

Behind the scenes we're improving our bottom line. We recently purchased company beer and non-alcoholic drinks. This has a large impact on our P&L, ensuring that Livery and Yeomanry events now wash their faces financially, reducing, rather than adding to, the Company deficit. Our improved non-alcoholic drinks offer also improves inclusivity, ensuring we offer a warm welcome, with top-quality beverages, to everyone.

Celebrating the centenary

Much has been written about the amazing centenary, and I'd draw your attention to pages 22–27. Here, however, I'd like to highlight the work of Livery and Yeomanry Committee members and thank them personally. Fritha Winton made the Evensong at St Paul's a wonderful evening, reverent and celebratory in equal measure. Zoe Shaw's aesthetics work on the Salamander Ball gave the Hall genuine wow factor. Both have done brilliant work for the committee this year. I'd also like to thank my wife, Mel, for organising the marvellous entertainment on the night of the ball.

Thanks to the committee

As well as the above, Marc Begg, as Deputy Warden, has been hard at work, organising a delicious online cheese tasting, building placards for the Lord Mayor's Parade and planning next year's events. Izzy Pelling and Eliza Wauchope have already made their presence felt in their first committee year, with Izzy organising the highly enjoyable Gusbourne Vineyard visit (see page 48). We welcome Hannan Ali this coming year. Gavin Park Weir steps down after great service to the committee, especially through his work on the Great XII Sailing. Khush Cooper steps down after incredible hard work growing the ambition of the committee. He spearheaded the Summer BBQ and his Warden's Visits this year were exceptional. We visited Chelsea Hospital and experienced Nijmegen Company's Mounting the Guard followed by a wonderful lunch at the King's Guard Officer's Mess, an occasion resplendent with history and great fun.

Huge thanks too, to the Master and Wardens for their support, the Clerk, always ready with sage advice, the Assistant Clerk, ever present and ever enthusiastic, Catharine Melville, the beating heart of events, Katy Tytler, indefatigable in her energy and positivity and the Hall Team, spearheaded by Garry Timmins and Victoria Vronska, who are top-notch.

What's next?

Future ideas include a Thames Bridge Fundraiser, a Musical Recital, Ballet Performance, Burns Night Supper, breakfast lecture series, Quiz and Curry night and a Heritage Day celebrating the craft of Ironmongers. And my own Warden's visit, which will be, inevitably, a touch dramatic. So 2025–26 promises to be another bumper year, do get involved!



**VICTORY
AVOIDED AT
THE GREAT
XII QUIZ**

ANDREW HARRISON AND ELIZABETH SQUIRE,
LIVERYMEN

The Ironmongers' quiz team achieved a commendable ninth place in this month's Great XII Quiz, hosted by the Haberdashers.

Our team—Will Pender, Henrietta Brailsford, Elizabeth Squire, Fritha Winton, Tabitha Jones, Chilufya Mulenga, Laura Prieto, David Thompson, Andrew Harrison and Philippa Broadhurst—tackled a broad mix of questions, from Victorian prime ministers to greyhound racing.

Highlights included correctly identifying the only book of the Old Testament with a 'y' in its name, and knowing how many motorways connect to the M25. Less successful was our attempt to calculate the number of possible *Cluedo* combinations. Confidence wavered in some cases, with a few right answers swapped out for wrong ones at the last moment.

We started strong, ranking third after three rounds, but eased off just enough to avoid the dubious honour of hosting next year's quiz—a duty awarded to the winners. This year, that honour went to the Drapers, while the Vintners claimed the wooden spoon...which unfortunately has gone missing, to the dismay of the Goldsmiths who had gilded it.

Sails, smiles and shared success

MARK LEE AND ALASTAIR SMITH, LIVERYMEN



ABOVE: (left to right) Ewan Wauchope, Iain Reid, Richard Hunting, Khushru Cooper, Henrietta Brailsford, Archer Goodall, Sa Bastin, Mike Lloyd, Rupert Goodall, Mark Lee, Alistair Smith, Pippa Broadhurst, George Bastin, Sahra Evans, Chilufya Mulenga, Isla Cooper, Gavin Park Weir, Oli Rose, Mel Rose, Janey Park Weir, David Coates, Susan Keane.



A record group of Ironmongers gathered at Seaview, Isle of Wight, on the last weekend of May 2025 to host and compete in the Great XII Sailing Challenge 2025. Practising on Friday evening and a supper of team tactics set us up perfectly for racing on Saturday.

The *Old Guard* team, comprising Captain Mark Lee, Skipper Mike Lloyd, Chili Mulenga and Pippa Broadhurst started well, in the front pack of five boats. Neck and neck with the Skinners for some time, we were becalmed and eventually pushed back into third place. Much jostling for position followed, with the final result of a Skinners' win, Drapers' second, and Ironmongers' sixth (qualifying for the medal race).

The *Young Guard* team started well in the leading pack. It maintained third place from early on, expertly navigated by Archie Goodall. Sahra Evans and Rupert 'Too Good' Goodall trimmed sails and achieved maximum boat speed, and the position was defended as they approached the final mark. Alastair Smith on helm successfully covered the Drapers to stop them sneaking in, and the team finished third.

The medal race is always hotly contested and this year was no exception. In fierce competition from the start, both Ironmonger boats began towards the back of the fleet. After an exhilarating 60 minutes of wet and windy conditions, the junior team finished 8/24 and the senior team 11/24, allowing, as decorum dictates, our guests to take line honours.

As well as the sailing in the Mermaids, Henrietta Brailsford and husband Simon came along in the family cruiser and with crewing assistance from Oli and Mel Rose and Isla and Khush Cooper, plus toddlers, shadowed the cruiser race in preparation for racing next year.

Our Master was at hand to present trophies and champagne to the winners, before an excellent dinner was shared by more than 200 participants in a spirit of friendship and celebration.

SUCCESS ON THE SLOPES

MARC BEGG AND EMMA HALFORD-MACLEOD,
LIVERYMEN AND INTER-LIVERY SKIING ORGANISERS



The 15th Inter-Livery Skiing Competition (ILSC) took place in Morzine from 22–24 January 2025, with 35 companies, 208 racers and 66 spectators. The week ended in style with the Parallel Slalom and Giant Slalom, run in excellent snow conditions by ESF Morzine.



Katie Hudson,
Team Captain

Friday night's Prize Giving Dinner — complete with polished trophies, medals, French wine and the coveted new 'Ski Bum' award — was a lively celebration of sport and fellowship. The Ironmongers' fastest team of Marc Beggs, Christopher Hudson and George Bastin won the Actuaries' Cup for the second year running, with Marc also taking Gold in the men's 41–64 category and Team Captain Katie Hudson (above right) winning Bronze in the under-40 women's. The Coopers' dominated again, with the Campbell brothers finishing 1st, 3rd and 5th, while the Snow Camp Triathlon raised £55,000 for charity through skiing, biathlon, snowshoeing and curling. Next year the competition moves to Mayrhofen, Austria, 14–16 January 2026.

ILSC WAS LAUNCHED BY GEORGE BASTIN

in Morzine in 2010. From just 40 people in its first year, it has grown into the biggest livery event outside the UK, raising hundreds of thousands of pounds for charity, including the Lord Mayor's Appeal and Snow Camp. Although George (above) handed over the reins some years ago, he and his wife Sa still attend every year.



“The championship was never about money but about bringing people together. On the slopes you quickly make friends, and when you return to the Hall you already know people and have something to talk about. It really works.”

— GEORGE BASTIN



ABOVE: The final awards ceremony; George Bastin receives his 'Ski Bum' award.

A SPARKLING DAY OUT IN KENT

OLI ROSE, WARDEN OF THE
LIVERY AND YEOMANRY



On Saturday 7 June, members of the Company enjoyed a memorable visit to Gusbourne Vineyard, located near the village of Appledore, a few miles from the Kent coast. Despite an uncertain weather forecast in the lead-up, the day proved dry and bright — perfect conditions for our outing.

Gusbourne, with origins dating back to 1410 and established as a vineyard in 2004 by Andrew Weeber, has become a standout producer of English sparkling wine. Its wines are now served at acclaimed restaurants such as The Fat Duck and Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, and frequently grace our own tables at Ironmongers' Hall.

Our host, Matt, gave an engaging introduction to the estate's history and winemaking approach before guiding us through the Boot Hill and Commanders Vineyards. We learned about the use of classic Champagne varieties — Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier — and the challenges and innovations of English viticulture.

The visit concluded with a tasting of four of Gusbourne's signature sparkling wines, accompanied by a generous picnic lunch. A surprise gift — a magnum of the 2016 *Blanc de Blancs* — added a special touch to an already enjoyable afternoon.

The day offered a wonderful mix of learning, fellowship and exceptional wine. Our thanks to Gusbourne for their warm hospitality.

Hitting the mark with team spirit

MARK LEE, LIVERYMAN

In May a dozen Ironmongers visited the West London Shooting Ground to take part in the annual Inter-Livery Charity Clay Shoot. A wide range of experiences and ages came together to provide three Ironmongers' teams of people with similar levels of experience. Everyone enjoyed great weather and a chance to meet fellow Ironmongers and members of other livery companies.

The weather was excellent, with sun and a light breeze. Arriving in time for breakfast, the teams then assembled and set off to the first stand. Later in the round there was a chance for all four in a team to shoot together at flurries of targets sent overhead, a format that gets the adrenaline going! Reloading speed was as important as accuracy in this, and all our teams did well. Overall, the Ironmongers' A team came 8th of the livery teams, 8th in the Flush and 11th overall, aided considerably by the shooting skills of our top scorer and current Master.

In early June, three Ironmongers took part in the Inter-Livery Bisley day, shooting across five disciplines (Target Rifle at 1,000 yards, Sniper Rifle at 300 yards, .22 Gallery Rifle, Running Boar, and Black Powder Revolver Pistol), at this internationally renowned shooting ground in Surrey. Tony Heath, Colin Coull and Alwyn Jones represented us and helped the organisers raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund. The prizes were awarded by Colin Bell, a 104-year-old pilot who flew a Mosquito in the Second World War.

Ironmongers should look out for opportunities to practise throughout the year as we look forward to next year's events.



CAMARADERIE AND COMPETITION

Taking aim at Headley Clay Pigeon Shooting Club

HANNAN ALI, FREEMAN

Despite a wet start, 15 Ironmongers and guests enjoyed a day of fellowship and friendly competition at the Headley Clay Pigeon Shooting Club in the Surrey Hills in October. Nestled in 11 acres of secluded woodland, Headley's award-winning, family-run grounds offered the perfect introduction to clay shooting.

The day began with a safety briefing and hands-on guidance from experienced tutors, who made everyone feel confident and at ease. After learning the basics, participants tested their aim on 15 simulated clays, many scoring their first

satisfying hits, before moving on to a 25-clay competition. The 'Down-the-Line' format, one of the sport's classic disciplines, proved ideal for first-timers.

Following the shoot, a relaxed lunch of gourmet burgers and Greek salad was enjoyed around the fire pit. Junior Warden and club member Matt Tilbury remarked: 'Fantastic that the weather cleared to allow the Ironmongers to enjoy Headley hospitality and break a good many clays on some tricky stands.'

Thanks go to Freeman Kerry Gibson for organising the outing and to the Headley team for their expert hosting. The day offered not only a chance to learn a new skill, but also to connect and create shared memories, leaving everyone looking forward to the next adventure.

ADMISSIONS

RICHARD SLADE ESQ, MASTER 2017, CHAIRMAN OF THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

Since last July we have 22 new freemen and 11 new liverymen. The good news is that none of them have been put off either by the new subscription fee, nor by their interview (undemanding, we hope) with the Admissions Committee. We also have a new Ironmongers' Scholar. They are all very welcome.

The vast majority were introduced to the Ironmongers through friends rather than family. Only two of our new entrants joined through the family route called Patrimony.

A quarter of our new entrants are female. We would like to see this proportion increase.

Any freeman can initially introduce a friend to the Ironmongers, but to become a freeman a new candidate will ultimately need a proposer and a seconder, both of whom must be liverymen and at least one of whom must be a member of the Court. The Admissions Committee is very grateful for all conscientious efforts made by proposers and seconds to get to know their candidates before they propose them and to continue as mentors for the early years of membership.

The Admissions Committee meets about four times a year to conduct interviews and make recommendations to the Court about granting the freedom and the livery. We also have a responsibility for promoting continued engagement by members with the Company. It is continued engagement, and not membership numbers on paper, which make all the difference to the character and future of the Ironmongers.

SCHOLAR

DECEMBER 2024

Miss Katie Wellstead, Ironmongers' Oxford Medal Winner 2024

FREEMEN

DECEMBER 2024

Mr Henry Boddy, Patrimony

Mr Benjamin Gorton, Patrimony

Mr Martin Wright, Redemption

Mrs Francesca Trevelyan, Redemption

Mr Gavin Evans, Redemption

Mr Alwyn Jones, Redemption

Mr Nelson Alvares da Silva e Silva, Redemption

Mr Alexis Liming, Redemption

Mr Hamish Young, Redemption

Mr Brice Fanning, Redemption

MAY 2025

Mr Mark Sewell, Redemption

Mrs Julia Winston, Redemption

Mr Patrick Penny, Redemption

Ms Tamara Hutton-Brown, Redemption

Mr Jack Thornborough, Redemption

Captain Tom Hodson, Redemption

Lieutenant Samuel Hollington, Redemption

JUNE 2025

Mr Craig Penfold, Redemption

Brigadier Grant Mason, Redemption

Miss Clare Ambrosino, Redemption

Miss Jacqueline Chan, Redemption

LIVERYMEN

DECEMBER 2024

Mr Jeremy McIlroy

Mr Nicholas Gorton

Mr Charles Hayes

Mr Stephen Harris

Mr William Pender

Mr David Thompson

Mr Rupert Goodall

Mrs Cheryl Roux

MAY 2025

Mr David Barrett

JUNE 2025

Mr Marc Begg

Mr Nicholas D. O. Williams



To find out more about becoming a member,
email membership@ironmongers.org

DEATHS AND OBITUARIES

2024–2025

We are sad to report the deaths of the following members this year and offer our deepest condolences to their family and friends.

- * Sam Apsley
- * Michael Richard Gorton
- * Rear Admiral Gilbert Archibald Ford Hitchens CB



Sam Apsley was born in Belfast in 1931. His family moved to Coventry in the 1930s, where Sam was educated at King Henry VIII Grammar School. His education, like much of Coventry, took something of a battering from Hitler's bombers.

Samuel Dougan Apsley

29 September 1931 – 5 June 2025

After school Sam joined Sterling Metals as a foundry technician, before doing his National Service in the RAF, stationed at Winnipeg in Canada. On rejoining Sterling Metals he was sent to the Foundry Training College in Wolverhampton. After a spell with Birmid Qualcast he became Assistant Director at the British Cast Iron Research Association, in charge of external consultancy.

After retirement Sam couldn't sit still and continued as a consultant, being particularly proud to be head-hunted by the Carbon Trust at age 75.

Sam was an expert in iron and aluminium casting and the production of iron and steel, and he was involved in the Institute of British Foundrymen (Institute of Cast Metals Engineers) for 75 years. He served as National President in 1979 and received a 'Long and Notable Services' award in 2019.

Sam joined the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers in 1980 and made himself useful, becoming Master in 2000. Letters of condolence praised the help that he gave to others on the Court and the fact that he actually knew how to make an aluminium casting! He particularly enjoyed the charitable work: especially the visits to Landrake School and the administration of scholarships to university students.

Sam met his future wife Rita at a police station in Coventry(!) — it had a large hall usable for dancing — and they were married for over 63 years, leading to two children and four grandchildren. Outside his professional life he loved rugby, dancing and holidays in Austria and Madeira, and he was an assiduous chauffeur for his active children.

He leaves behind tears but many grateful memories.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Year ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY		
Investments at valuation	17,828	18,100
Borrowings	4,500	4,500
Investments less borrowings	13,328	13,600
Income		
Hall hire, catering and wines	1,307	1,084
Investment and rental income	1,286	1,356
Other income and fines	282	331
	2,875	2,771
Expenditure		
Hall hire, catering and wines	949	797
Hall and Company	1,953	1,908
Interest	154	155
	3,056	2,860
Net profit/(loss)	(181)	(87)
Investment gains /(losses)	(468)	539
Total comprehensive income/(shortfall)	(649)	448
THE IRONMONGERS' CHARITIES		
Investments at valuation	44,216	43,023
Borrowings	10,500	10,500
Investments less borrowings	33,716	32,523
Income		
Almshouse residents' fees	455	306
Investment income	2,363	2,222
Donations and legacies	120	129
	2,938	2,657
Expenditure and charitable giving		
Almshouse and administration costs	1,362	1,383
Interest payable	395	395
Grants and donations	610	540
	2,367	2,318
Surplus	571	339
Investment gains/ (losses)	1,163	973
Increase in funds	1,734	1,312

Following the Uniting Direction of the Charity Commission effective 1 April 2012 the following six Charities are reported as a single entity: Sir Robert Geffery's Almshouse Trust, Sir Robert Geffery's Landrake School Charity, Thomas Betton's Charity (Educational), Thomas Betton's Charity (General Estate), Thomas Betton's Charity for Pensions and Relief In Need, and the Ironmonger's Foundation.



Ironmongers' Company

Ironmongers' Hall
Shaftesbury Place
London EC2Y 8AA

020 7776 2300
admin@ironmongers.org

ironmongers.org