

## Annual Banquet – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018

One of the highlights of the Water Conservator's social calendar is the black tie Annual Banquet, which this year was held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November at the beautiful Drapers' Hall in Throgmorton Street in the City of London.



The Drapers' Company has owned the site since 1543 when it purchased the London mansion of Thomas Cromwell (who had been executed in 1540) from Henry VIII. The original building was destroyed in the 1666 Great Fire of London and its replacement was destroyed again by fire in 1772. The current building, designed by John Gorham, and built immediately following the second fire survived the Blitz of the Second World War.

The formal proceedings of the elegant evening started with a welcome from the Master, his Wardens and their Consorts before a champagne reception adjacent to the Livery Hall. The Beadle called us to dinner just before 7.30pm and following Grace by the Master, we sat down to an excellent three course meal with accompanying wines and port. Following the "Sung Grace" we all then participated in the Loving Cup Ceremony, before the Master led us through the toasts to the Queen, the Royal Family and the Lord Mayor.



We were then treated to a musical interlude performed by a pianist and two vocalists from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Songs from Carmen, Irving Berlin and Phantom of the Opera were beautifully delivered and much appreciated by us all.

The Master then had the honour of investing Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli as an Honorary Freeman of the Water Conservators. Michael, who is a good friend of the Water Conservators was until recently, the Master World Trader, is an active Alderman (Broad Street Ward) and has a distinguished professional and commercial career. Michael responded with grace and wit and confirmed he is looking forward to being one of us “drips”!



The Master then proposed a toast (in water) to the Guests, who included Lord Chartres (until recently the Bishop of London), distinguished members of the Military who have a close association with our Company and representatives from two of our Corporate Members (Thames Water and Hydraulic Analysis).

Lord Chartres in responding on behalf of the guests was both amusing and knowledgeable about the work of our Company. He spoke of the “sacredness of water” – an expression close to all our hearts – before proposing the toast to our Company  
“Root and Branch, may it flourish for ever”.

Following a brief response from the Master, we were invited to join him for a Stirrup Cup before the majority of us left the Hall at 11.00pm.

A thoroughly enjoyable evening, with thanks to the Master and our Clerk, Ralph Riley, for such hard work and attention to detail.

*Past Master, Keith Tozzi*