

# Modern Companies Dinner

**12 March 2018**

Held bi-annually in the March and September, the Modern Companies Dinner is a wonderful opportunity for the 32 or so Livery Companies formed since 1926 to come together to share fellowship and good dining. The host for each dinner rotates around the Modern Companies and so it was that the Water Conservators were proud to invite their Livery colleagues to the Watermens Hall on Monday 12 March.

Over sixty Masters and Wardens joined the Master Water Conservator and his Wardens at this black-tie event. Greeted with a champagne reception, guests filled the Watermens' Court Room and the air was soon thick with friendly greetings, City matters and good humour. The "home team" comprised of the Master, Mike Williamson, the Thames, Fleet and Walbrook Wardens, the Deputy Master and the Clerk who busily worked the room to ensure all our guests were looked after by the waiting staff.



Also much in evidence during the reception were details of the forthcoming WET 10 lecture to be held on 21 March in the Guildhall and information about the Company's "Magic Tap" which is now available to hire. It was pleasing to note many of the guests took away details of both.

Summoning all assembled to dinner the Clerk led the way into the dining room where a splendid meal awaited us. Catering was courtesy of the Cook and the Butler and their expertise and flair made for a magnificent dinner fit for our guests. The menu included Fillet of Brill, Highland Quail, Caramelised Fruits and a savoury. Excellent wines were paired with each course followed by coffee. There were no complaints from our exalted guests!

The Loyal Toast was proposed by the Master as was the toast to the City of London Corporation. The Master also thanked the catering staff and the Master Waterman for the use of his Hall. In response, our Principal Speaker, Alderman Peter Estlin gave a very amusing speech regaling us all about his recent holiday in the Galapagos Islands. Reference to the length of the beak of various finches on the island, first noted by Charles Darwin gave rise to some excellent humour.



On a more serious note however, Alderman Estlin emphasised the need for the Modern Companies to continue to support education and tertiary qualifications amongst its members in order to play the vital role that they currently fulfil. He noted the continued pressure on the City to lead the way and he paid tribute to the work the Modern Companies had done thus far.

Alderman Estlin then proposed a toast to the Modern Companies which was very well received.

In response, the Master Water Conservator thanked Alderman Estlin for his speech and went on to add his note of caution with regards to the environment and the rise of waste plastics in our rivers and oceans. Making reference to recent publicity – especially by David Attenborough – of the current disaster, the Master challenged us all on the responsible use and disposal of plastic if we were to reduce the terrible toil it is making on our planet. Bottled drinking water was a particular focus.

But stepping down from his soap box, the Master thanked Alderman Estlin once again and – in a highly choreographed performance – was joined by his Wardens in thanking all for attending and calling for a Stirrup Cup to be prepared.

Finally, the Master Firefighter John Mansfield confirmed that the next Modern Companies Dinner would be hosted by the Firefighters and looked forward to seeing us all again on 10 September at the Wax Chandlers' Hall.

Carriages arrived around ten o'clock and guest departed in fine fettle after a magnificent evening where the name of the Water Conservators was held in very high regard.