

# Worshipful Company of Water Conservators

## Annual Banquet, 2017



The prestigious Annual Banquet of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators was held at the magnificent Cutlers Hall and marked the social highlight of the Company's year. Hosted in their own inimitable way by the Master, Mike Williamson and his Consort, Sandra, all guests were treated to a first-class meal, a wonderful musical interlude and an amusing and at times thought provoking speech by the Principal Guest, Mr Ian Harris.

To start off this grand black-tie event, guests were greeted by the Master and Wardens together with their respective Consorts and then treated to a champagne reception. The occasion called for the smartest of "DJ's" and the most beautiful of evening dresses and there was plenty of both on display. There were also a large number of younger guests, many of them the families of members of the Company. This led to a high level of energy in the Hall which was both exciting and stimulating. Certainly, the volume of conversation during the reception drinks confirmed the enthusiasm of all assembled.



The Cutlers Hall is a splendid building and the combination of the ancient artefacts on the walls, the Livery crests, the banner above Top Table and the glittering guests seated at a three-legged table gave the whole dinner a most dramatic sense of style and splendour; the Livery at its most magnificent.

After a most enjoyable meal, proceedings moved on to the sung grace, led by the Master and the Principal Guest, followed by the Loving Cup

Ceremony, a lovely way of involving all the guests together. Whilst it has a serious undertone, it is great fun to partake!

After the Loyal Toast by the Master and further toast to the Lord Mayor and the City of London Corporation, it was time for the musical interlude. Guests were treated to a wonderful performance by members of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (appearing by kind permission of the Principal) who sang some very familiar songs from the Shows and to an extremely high standard. There is nothing like hearing professional singers revelling in the excellent acoustics of the Hall and to such a receptive audience. They were applauded heartily.



The Master then welcomed our guests. Firstly, Commander Nick Foster from HMS Scott and his Consort Hayley Foster were welcomed. The Company is a long-standing supporter of HMS Scott and Nick is a good friend. Next to be welcomed were April Keech from Hydraulic Analysis Ltd and Henry Badman and Alex Nickson from Thames Water, both companies being Corporate Sponsors to the Water Conservators. Their support of the Company is most welcome.

The Master also welcomed the Lady Rowers from the Poplar and Blackwell Rowing Club and paid tribute to their magnificent sporting prowess on the river under the direction of the Barge Master Jonny Dwan. They are a formidable opponent and not to be underestimated (or beaten) when they are in the *Water Forget-me-not* and in racing mode!

Finally, the Master welcomed the Principal Guest, Mr Ian Harris, CEO of the Wines and Spirits Trust and invited all members of the Company to be upstanding and toast all guests – named and otherwise - in water.

After a hearty round of applause Ian Harris rose to his feet in response. There then followed a most interesting and amusing speech focusing on the role and development of the Wine and Spirit Education Trust and the interaction between the wine and spirit industries with water and the environment. Ian managed to introduce much humour on the subject of water and wine into his speech which included telling us that his 8 year old daughter when asked what her father did for a living responded by saying that he drank wine all day! Finally, Ian proposed a toast to the Company – *The Worshipful Company of Water Conservators; root and branch may it flourish forever!*

All the assembled guests showed their appreciation in the normal manner.



In thanking Ian for his kind words, the Master brought the dinner to a conclusion with thanks to the Master Cutler for the use of his Hall, the caterers – The Cook and the Butler – for the excellent meal and to the Beadle for his ceremonial duties. Finally, he called for a Stirrup Cup to be prepared and invited all guests to join him. The Master and Wardens then processed from the Hall.

Thus concluded a wonderful evening and all guests departed in good humour and high spirits. We now look forward to the next Annual Banquet to be held on 1 November 2018 at the Drapers Hall.

**SLC**

**Thames Warden**

