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City Consorts exists to give the Consort of any future Livery Master of the City of London the confidence and knowledge to embrace and enjoy their year. As such, members of this group of past, current and future consorts meet to network and learn more about the City.

March 8th 2018 was, in some ways a different sort of meeting. It was our largest gathering to date, with over 150 members and their guests assembled, both to learn and to raise funds for the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

Carol Harris, an eminent social historian, spoke to us about the changing role of women in the early craft guilds and the Livery companies that they became, and the history of women's suffrage - the right to vote - across the globe. 2018 is the centenary of the first stage of suffrage for women in Britain – definitely a moment worth celebrating.

Carol's excellent visual presentation of suffragette memorabilia was supported by explanations of how various groups of women first marched through the streets, then, frustrated by lack of action, chose civil unrest to raise awareness of their cause. The viciousness of the government and legal retribution against these women would justifiably cause a Human Rights complaint today.

Because one of the most well known suffragettes, Emmeline Pankhurst, was imprisoned at Mansion House, we had hoped to secure it as our venue. Alas, an unscheduled State visit required use of the Lord Mayor's home on this auspicious date, but at short notice Saddlers' Hall kindly hosted us – and did us proud! For many, it was the first visit to this elegant hall, with its small museum of saddlery and interesting art collection, and we were made most welcome.

We are delighted to confirm that, between ticket sales, the raffle, donations for ribbons and sales of playing cards, our generous members and guests raised around £2,500 for the Lord Mayor's Appeal, making the day a great success all round.

Our next event will be a limited number walking tour of City Livery Halls on 17 April 2018 - twenty places for the morning walk and twenty places for the afternoon walk, with a light lunch for all to meet and swap notes. Full details and a booking form will be circulated to members only shortly. Please save the date!

Von Spofforth, Chairman, City Consorts
Mary Linington, Chair, Events & Activities Committee