

## TREASURES OF A MODERN COMPANY

About 60 C2 members and some guests signed on to Zoom to hear Michael Fowle, a past Master of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Accountants, give a fascinating talk about the Company's treasures.

The Company is one of the modern Livery Companies and was established as a Livery Company in 1977 and incorporated by a Royal Charter in 2012. It is 86<sup>th</sup> in the historic order of precedence in the Livery. In that relatively short time, a most impressive collection of treasures has built up mostly adorned with their coat of arms. That coat of arms includes the dragon of Wales, The lion of England, a scale balance, griffins and three towers each with the portcullis in a different position - fully down, half down or up. Over the years the Company received gifts often from Masters and members, with some contribution from Commercial Companies. Many of them were individually made in silver by modern designers of the time. The collection also includes antique tankards that were gifted as well as the badges of office.

One of the earliest treasures was a mace, the head of which is detached and traditionally placed in front of the Master at dinner, a lectern made of glass and wood, and a rather splendid Loving Cup. These are 'treasures' which most Livery Companies have. A Master's badge and chain were made and as time passed a Consorts brooch, which is passed on to the successor each year. The past Mistress receives a replica. A new Master's badge was produced, with what appeared to be 'claws' around it, as the early one was a relatively standard (boring?) design. One or two members commented that giving the master a hug sometimes caused problems as the claws got entwined in their clothing or hair.

The silver is variable in design, reflecting the designer and period when they were made. We saw photographs of various cups which adorn the table at a dinner for various members to drink out of. Rather beautiful, were six sets of three goblets made by Alex Telford. Their design is cylindrical and contrasts with straight lines seen in three earlier goblets – equally beautiful. In the sets of three each goblet depicted the portcullis in a different position reflecting the coat of arms. In 2017 Past Master James Macnamara gifted the Company a fine set of six silver goblets, each engraved with the crest of one of the military units the Company supports. One was lost but the Clerk of the Company seeks sites on the internet to see if it appears!



The Company does have a most impressive Collection and it was lovely to see them and to see how different designers over the years interpreted their brief. The silver is showcased in the Hall of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, but it is routinely brought out at dinners to adorn the table and drink from the goblets. The treasures also include a 5 foot wide engraved glass screen which unfortunately can't be displayed at the present time.

A rather curious and perhaps unique discovery was that members wore a burgundy jacket at dinner, and as women have become liverymen new designs were developed so that they too could wear the burgundy.

It was a most enjoyable event with questions afterwards when some of our members wondered what it was like to drink out of the silver cups and goblets. We were assured that the taste of wine was not tainted. Michael clearly loves the silver and its history and that came through in his fascinating and engaging talk. It is wonderful that the 'treasures' are routinely used at the Company's dinners. When you get a chance to go to another Livery dinner have a look to see what treasures your Company has, and, if and when you go to the Lord Mayor's banquet you will see, on the tables, a wonderful display of the treasures of the Mansion House – mostly gold. After the talk break-out rooms gave a chance to chat each other, and there was plenty of chat.