

## The Young Pattenmakers Dinner 2021 By Freeman Sarah Thornhill

The Young Pattenmakers Dinner 2021 was my first dinner as a Freeman and the first time meeting so many Young Pattenmakers as I joined The Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers during COVID. Therefore, you can imagine my excitement. Not only was it my first dinner, but it was also the first time I was able to share the glory of The Pattenmakers with my sister, Lucy.

Dressed and ready to go, we headed toward the venue. At the door we were greeted by welcoming smiles and informed about what we would find in the next room. The atmosphere was electric in the (gathering room), watching people reconnect with those who they had not seen in an inconceivable amount of time and being introduced to new connections. For myself and my sister, it was all new (well mostly) and was great to finally put names to real-life-faces. After a glass of bubbly and a turn around the room, the gong was calling for dinner. Perfect timing, as we were hungry by this point.

I had been to formal ATC dinners but never to anywhere we clapped in the top table. We laughed together, trying to stick to the right pace. The food was absolutely glorious, as was the wine. My favourite part of the dinner was the bread and butter pudding and the lamb. I do not generally eat lamb but the lamb was tenderly cooked and well accompanied with some seasonal vegetables, making it a pleasure to eat. Obviously, being sat on a table with people who I had not met before meant it was an opportunity to get to know them. I was sat on the same table as Laura Newman, who was last year's winner of the Young FM of the Year Award. She was honoured with the award that evening and enjoyed a rightful celebration!

In between the courses were the speeches and toasts. We heard from Sophia Lee - Chair of the Young Pattenmakers, who welcomed and thanked everyone for making the YP 2021 year one to remember. She also introduced the guest speaker, whose risqué speech full of humorously crude examples of how resilience is key to overcoming obstacles resonated with many. Although the speech was masked in humour, at its core was a story of true pain and suffering, as his injury meant he had to regain his ability to walk from scratch. He did not allow this to stop him from adventuring, neither did it stop him from returning to the place he suffered his injury and volunteering for the organisation that helped save him. This positive outlook on life, especially in the face of hardship and charitable endeavours, is from what I have realised from my short time as a Pattenmaker, is one of the highly valued characteristic for those who are involved in the Livery.

The guest speaker's speech led nicely into a special award ceremony for some students at De Montfort university, who are studying shoe design and have overcome adversity. I thought this was a wonderful award and a rare one, as it focused on the successes of the individual rather than just the fact they are in hardship. Two individuals were awarded this award! Following this, The Master Warden closed in a speech hailing the successes of Sophia - which everyone echoed - in her organisation of the evening and her leadership as Chair of the YP. We then clapped out the procession and returned to the greeting room for after dinner drinks and some more mingling.

Overall, the YP annual dinner is hopefully the first of many amazing events I will attend as a Freeman of the YP. The only down side of the evening was that my shoes were so sore we left just before the

carriages were called. My sister enjoyed it so much she wanted to join herself! So, I may have been assisted in recruiting a potential future member!



