

New Liveryman - Brian de Bell

I was both pleased and proud to have been clothed as a Liveryman of the Company on 20th October, prior to the Trafalgar Dinner.

Having lived in Northampton, in my later childhood, it was not surprising that my first employment was with a footwear manufacturer, as that was still the prevalent industry in the town in the 1960's and remains significant to this day, though much diminished.

I learned much about the manufacture of footwear and came to know the 'clicking' and 'closing' operations amongst others. I was, however, in the Estates Department, which had, other than looking after the many shops, responsibility for maintaining the buildings and facilitating the running of the company's two factories and main warehouse. Thus I had a connection with both footwear and facilities management, which placed me in the two fields with which the Pattenmakers has close association.

I was admitted as a Freeman of the Company in July 2022, having attended several Company events prior. In the ensuing period I have attended several more Company events and found the members to be most friendly and welcoming, which inspired me to progress to Livery.

I have a great affection for the City of London, my father was born in Bermondsey and family members lived, and some still do, in the Greater London area and suburbs

On visiting, in my early years, I remember being taken to Saint Paul's Cathedral. My father parked our car on a rubble wasteland, near to the Cathedral where only street name signs stood above ground level. I was most amused to see that we had parked beside Milk Street, with another sign, Bread Street, nearby. Rebuilding had barely begun, following the war damage.

Latterly, I was pleased to have the task of the design and management of the refitting of shop premises in Cheapside and Gracechurch Street, whilst working for Thomas Cook, the travel company.

Now I find myself having a close connection to the City, my affection has grown and I am now able to support it and the Company, in their charitable activities.

Long may the Company and the City of London flourish. I have seen the City rise from the devastation of World War II and continue to develop. As I stated at the beginning, I am pleased and proud to now be part of it.