

Ella Gladwin wins the Pattenmakers Future Young Leader Award 2026

I had never heard of the Worshipful Company of the Pattenmakers until a mentor of mine reached out to me and suggested I applied to Future Young Leader in FM award. Sitting in a rabies prevention centre in Cambodia after being bitten by a dog... I read the application criteria. "I have no chance of winning this" I said to my father sat with me. "What have you got to lose" he responded with. And that's how my journey started.

After hours and hours of research into the Worshipful Company of the Pattenmakers, what a Pattenmaker was, what a Livery company is, how it's structured, how it all started – quiz me - I finally submitted my application.

I didn't think much of it, like I said, I was convinced I had no chance, until I opened an email saying I was a finalist... no time to waste, I had homework to do. Besides, there's no point being interviewed by a judging panel and you not know who you're talking to. So I began researching the judges, who they were, what they did, information about their day time jobs and their involvement with the Pattenmakers. You might call me a stalker, I say that's just due diligence!

Fast forward to my interview – nervous was an understatement. I had my props and my script ready. One question from each judge, it can't be that bad. Have you ever heard of intrinsic feedback? It's when you know if you've performed well or not. "What are you TALKING about?!" is what was pulsing through my head every second I spoke. "You're not answering the question", "Be more confident", again, "What are you talking about." So my intrinsic feedback loop said I had stuffed it.

Character building. Win or lose, I had met 6 new well established industry professionals, I'd pushed myself out my comfort zone, and I'd learnt about the history of the Pattenmakers – it's not the end of the world if I didn't win. But I did.

On Friday 23rd January 2026, I received my award at Mansion House in the heart of the City of London. I brought my parents with me so they could experience a white tie dinner and the traditions. This was my third Pattenmakers dinner, so despite being a newbie, I'm starting to get my head around it, but let me tell you about my first dinner.

I received an invitation with a "top tips" guide around dress code and traditions, such as the no phone use, the Toast to the King, the Guests and the Company and a "Stirrup Cup" (a parting drink before you leave), so I knew it would all be formal and serious, therefore I was NERVOUS, especially as I was attending alone. **If you were at the dinner at the Barber-Surgeons' Hall and saw me pacing up and down outside for 10 minutes, you now know why**

Palms are sweaty, knees weak – you know the lyrics – I anxiously walked through the grand oak doors to be greeted by a man with a big red gown on. I was given a “program”, if you will, with the evening events and seating plan with my name at the top. I was instructed to give the man with the red gown my program. I almost jumped out of my skin when he - what’s a nicer word then shouted? Boldly, LOUDLEY, stated my name to the entire room. I was then ushered to shake hands with a line of 5 or 6 people dressed in the same red gowns with medals around their necks. I soon after learned that they were the wardens (similar to a board of directors I suppose). I’m sure they were probably as confused as me when I was shaking their hands saying “how’s it going, it’s a pleasure to be here and meet you.” But hey, I’m still learning.

We’ve all been there, stood amongst a group where you don’t know anyone – it’s daunting. But I was welcomed with open arms. The judges came over to see me and introduced me to a group of Pattenmakers, and then after chewing everyone’s ear off for half an hour we were called to dinner. A three course dinner with wine flowing continuously - a 22 year olds dream meal – shame I’m more of a Jägermeister girl.

Regardless, what stood out most to me throughout this entire experience was just how welcomed and included I felt by the Pattenmakers. From my very first dinner to receiving the award itself, I was met with genuine warmth, encouragement and curiosity — never once feeling like “the new one in the room”. The willingness of members to give their time, share their stories and make space for conversation made what could have been an intimidating environment feel inspiring instead. It’s a presence I truly enjoyed being part of, and one I’m grateful to now call my own. I’m looking forward to getting more involved, volunteering with the Young Pattenmakers committee and supporting the Company’s charitable causes in any way I can.

Thank you to everyone who has made this journey so memorable — I’m excited for what comes next.