



The Guild Newsletter

MARCH 2026



2025-2026 MASTER CHRIS CULLEN

Master's Update

Greetings all, I hope that everyone has had a fabulous start to 2026. The Christmas Carol service at St Martin's within Ludgate was a wonderful start to the festive season and we are indebted to the St Paul's School choir for an impressive performance.

As the days get longer and the signs of a new season are begin to appear, it is time to start planning our Spring and Summer calendar. To help with this you can find a summary of the fantastic programme of events that our social events team have put together. Hopefully there is something to suit everyone. This Guild thrives on connection, shared purpose, and a commitment to the future so I would very much hope to see everybody at one or more of the events.

Later in the newsletter you will also find details of this year's installation dinner, tickets for which are now on sale.

Like all City institutions, the Guild of Mercers' Scholars has been successful over the years thanks to a large number of people volunteering their time and commitment. To ensure we remain fit for the future it's important that we keep that pipeline of talent flowing. If you would like to become more involved either now or in future please get in touch with me or any member of the court to find out more on how to do this.

We are always on the look out for more Apprentice Masters. One of the beauties of our organisation, which is almost unique, is a talented membership that has a broad cross-section of skills across a wide variety of industry sectors. Being an AM requires a low time commitment but is a rewarding role that is crucial to our continued success.

Get involved, bring your ideas, and let's build something extraordinary together.

All the best,
Chris

**GUILD OF MERCERS'
SCHOLARS**

www.theguildofmercersscholars.com



Upcoming Events

For 2026, our social events team have put together a fabulous programme of events aimed at bringing together guild members, providing fun networking opportunities, building connections within the wider livery network, and having plenty of fun while enjoying some enriching experiences steeped in the history and tradition of the City.

Whether you are an Apprentice or a long-standing Guildsman keen to make the most of opportunities, or someone looking to discover more about the City and its heritage there is hopefully something for everyone.

Darts Evening, Thursday 26th March

If you have ever watched the world darts championships from Alexandra Palace and thought that it doesn't look too hard, now is your chance to step up to the oche put your skills to the test at the Flight Club in Shoreditch. The venue is a high tech take on a traditional pub game. Prior experience is not necessary though a sense of fun is recommended.

Guildhall Art Gallery, 25th April

A guided tour of one of London's most underappreciated artistic gems — the Guildhall Art Gallery. Built in 1885 to house the City of London's growing art collection, the Gallery showcases an impressive range of works ancient and new, with a natural emphasis on the life and times of London itself. In 1987 during renovations of the original Gallery the Museum of London Archaeological Service discovered the remains of London's Roman Amphitheatre and the building was re-designed to incorporate this piece of architectural history.

Viewing of the Ceremony of the Keys, Wednesday 13th May

A limited-numbers trip to view the Ceremony of the Keys: a 700-year-old, nightly ritual at the Tower of London where the main gates are locked for security.

Set amidst the mighty battlements of this ancient historic fortress, the Ceremony of the Keys is considered to be the oldest military ceremony in the world, it takes place daily at 9:30 PM. The ceremony has never been cancelled, though it was delayed once during the Blitz in World War II. We will meet at the West Gate of the Tower before being escorted to the ceremony.

Tour of Fullers brewery, Saturday 13th June 2026

Fullers Brewery at Chiswick, the home of London Pride and many other beers and ciders, has seen over 180 years of brewing taking place on site. Join us for a tour through the past and present of this historic brewery. We will learn how its famous drinks are made, how its brewing methods have evolved, and importantly get to sample a range of beers made by Fullers.

Walking tour of the City's Livery Halls

Join us in September for a bespoke, private tour of the exterior of several city's Livery Halls and hear about their contributions to the civic life in London, both old and new. Led by an expert accredited guide, we will discover the history and role of several of these magnificent halls within the heart of the City of London.



Events Cont.

The annual “Woolmen Sheep Drive & Livery Fair”, Sunday 27th September

The annual sheep drive on the last Sunday in September celebrates the most enduring of the city’s traditions. A long-established charity event, celebrating a Freeman’s ancient “right” to bring sheep to market over the Thames, toll free; all in aid of raising funds for The Woolmen Charity and The Lord Mayor’s Appeal.

The Woolmen Sheep Drive & Livery Fair showcases the important enduring contribution of London’s livery companies, from the formation of the City of London in years gone by through to modern times, both in respect of the continuous evolution of sustainable trades and the important charitable endeavours in support of the various challenges we face today.

2026 Christmas Carol Service, Monday 14th December

Always a highlight of the festive season, this year’s carol service will be hosted once again at St Martins within Ludgate in a service led by Father Andrew Crosbie.

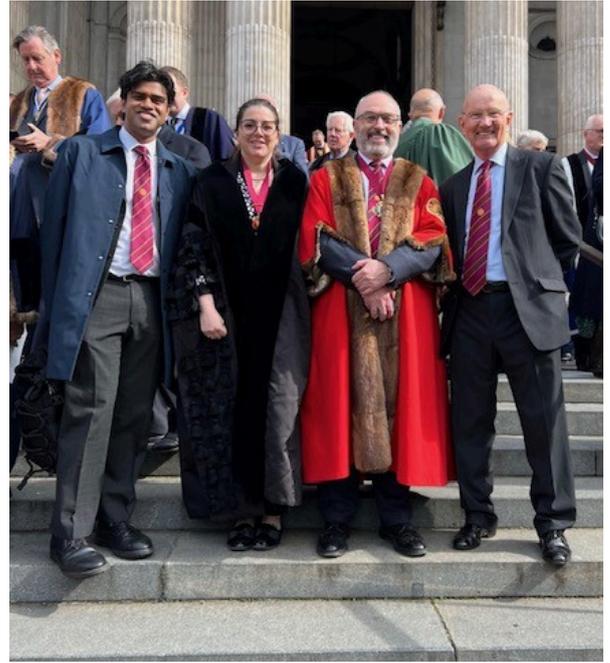
No doubt refreshments will be sought in a local hostelry after the service.

Keep an eye on the website’s event page for updates on all events.

2026 United Guilds Service

Friday 20-March saw the 82nd United Guilds' Service, held in the majestic surroundings of St. Paul's Cathedral. The event is essentially a ceremonial gathering to mark the work of Livery Companies and Guilds of the City of London and is attended by the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, Aldermen and Common Council.

This year marked a truly special milestone: for the very first time, the Guild of Mercers' Scholars were allocated a position thanks to the persistence and hard work of Grace our Clerk. It is rare that the entire Livery community gathers in one place and serves as a fabulous celebration of fellowship and civic duty. Next year's service will be held on Friday 12th of March, 2027, 11:15 am



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Installation Dinner 2026

Join us at the distinguished **Drapers' Hall** for the Guild of Mercers' Scholars annual Installation Dinner, to be held on **Thursday 29 October 2026**.

The jewel in the Guild's social calendar, the elegant evening of fine dining and timeless City tradition marks the installation of the Guild's new Master, Wardens, and Court for the upcoming year.

Set within one of the City's most magnificent and historic Livery Halls, Drapers' Hall stands on the former London mansion of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister and one of the key architects of Tudor government and the English Reformation.

Apprentice Grants

The last three months have seen a strong start to this year's Grants programme, with 3 grants already awarded with more applications in transit.

The grant scheme is open to all subscription paying Apprentices, who can apply for any amount up to £600 in pursuit of educational and professional development. This could be a contribution towards a certification or course in their chosen field, accommodation costs for charity work or supporting relevant work experience.

Look out for a virtual speaker series during the year which will showcase successful grant applications, with the recipients being talking about their chosen activity and key learning outcomes.

The Drapers bought Cromwell's former house from Henry VIII in 1543, after Cromwell's execution.

This black-tie evening celebrates the growth and enduring legacy of the Guild, while strengthening ties with our network of members and schools.

Tickets are now available through the Guild's website.

While the event is open to all Guildmen, Apprentices and Guests, places are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment in what will be a memorable evening of entertainment, camaraderie and occasion

These provide lively forums for members to learn about activities that Apprentices have undertaken and encourage further applications.

The grant scheme runs all year round with each application considered on its own merit.

As an apprentice, if you have an activity for which you wish to apply for funding, the application form is available through your login on the GMS website. You should discuss and review with your Apprentice Master in the first instance, who will countersign and submit your application to the Renter Warden and Junior Warden.