NEWSLETTER

November 2026

Dear Guild Members

STOP PRESS – THREE places available for College of Arms visit Thursday 19th November – details and booking on the Guild website.

Since our last Newsletter the Master has been busy representing your Guild inside and outside the City; below are images of Stephen and our Senior Warden, Alistair, at the Freemen and Guilds of the City of Chester weekend.

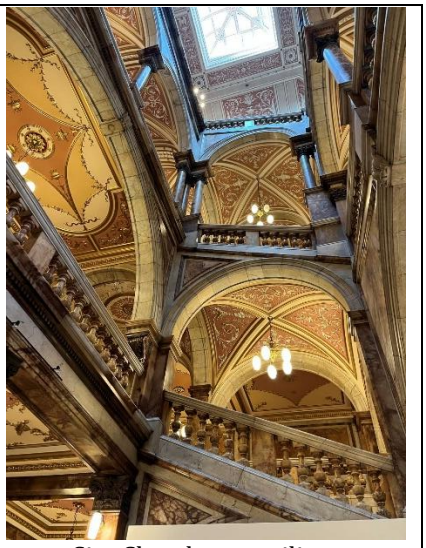




The Master dashed to the *Chester Weekend* from his own visit to Glasgow, where attendees were treated to a feast of Charles Rennie Mackintosh at the more modern end of the spectrum, and the Victorian glory years when Glasgow was a hive of industrial trade and development. We attended the *Wrights Choosing Dinner,* where we discovered some curious civic traditions (which rival London's Livery) and benefitted from their warm hospitality and fellowship.



The City Chambers



City Chambers - ceilings

Charles Rennie Mackintosh gems



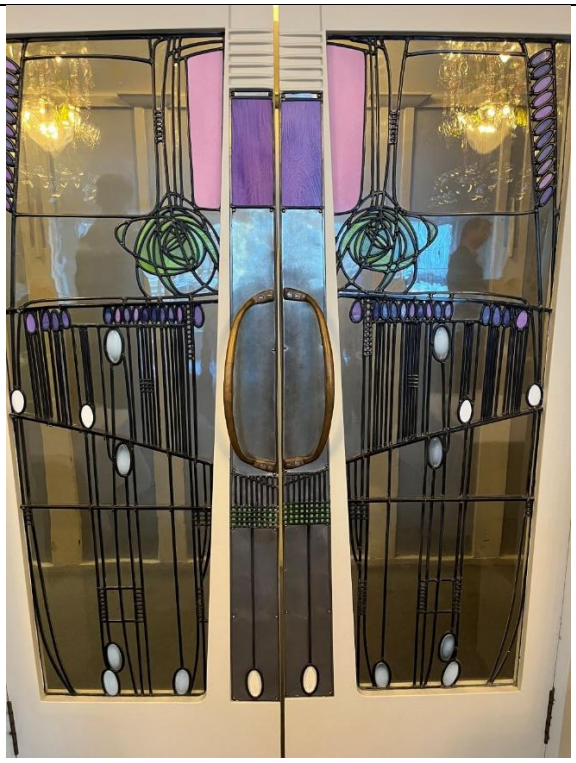
The House for an Art Lover



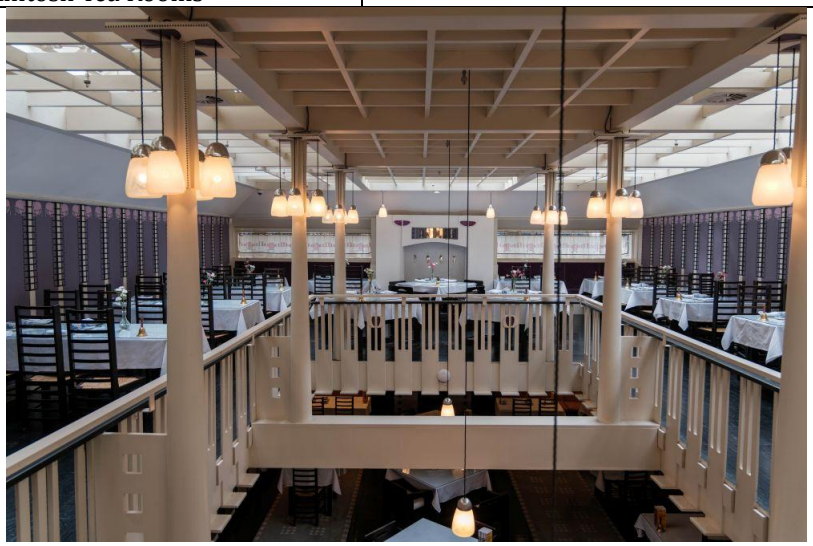
The White Room inside the House



The Mackintosh Tea Rooms



The door to the Ladies' Room inside the Tea Rooms



Mezzanine level of the Tea Rooms



The Guild table at the Choosing Dinner (Installation) held at Trades' Hall

Before his trip to Glasgow the Master attended the Annual Sheep Drive with some 60+ Guild Members, where in-between mingling with the Civic Party, Members and the odd celebrity, he was interviewed by a German television station.

With thanks to Venla for organising the Guild participation on the day





Early October saw a visit to Billingsgate Fish Market, where an education on all matters fishy was followed by an excellent luncheon.



Carol Jackson demonstrates fish filleting


Smoked fish starters

The end of the month saw the Master welcome another twenty members into the Guild and preside over the Guild's AGM at Cutlers' Hall






Honorary Treasurer Alan James presents the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2025 at the AGM


Pre-Dinner Drinks Reception









The Court Meeting and Joining Ceremony were followed by the AGM before Dinner in the splendour of the Cutlers' Hall dining room, concluding with a piano recital from Rekesh Chauhan BEM.

GUILD NEWS - RIP

I am sad to convey the news that **Barbara Newman CBE** died at the end of September. Barbara was a Common Councilman for the Ward of Aldersgate for more than 30 years; she held prominent leadership roles within the Corporation, serving as Chief Commoner in 1999 – only the second woman to do so – and was awarded a CBE in 2000 for services to the City. She was the second female Master of our Guild in 2006, and a founding member of the Lady Masters Association.

We will publish further dates for **2027** in the next Newsletter after the **Christmas Lunch at the Victory Services Club on Thursday, 10th December** – a few places are still available – please book online.

The Banquet to be held at Mansion House on Friday 4th December is now full. However, we are happy to add names to the waiting list, as we do occasionally get last-minute cancellations.



As Christmas approaches, a reminder that Guild Christmas Cards are available to order from the Merchandise Area of our website - £8.00 for a packet of ten cards with crested envelopes – this includes postage and packing. The other items of Guild Merchandise available would also make good Christmas presents!

CITY NEWS - and other Events



Court Assistant **Lars Andersen** is standing for Sheriff next year, take a look at his website and you can sign up your support, with just one click:

An Evening with Don Black - The Man with the Golden Pen
Tue 24 Nov – Doors 6:15pm – Central Criminal Court

A captivating evening of music and words as celebrated lyricist Don Black reflects on his extraordinary life and career.

Please click on link for Ticket Information:
https://DonBlack.eventbrite.com



CHRISTMAS FAIR AT DRAPERS – Monday 7th December

For almost 25 years, the City Christmas Fair has brought Christmas sparkle to the heart of the City. Set in the magnificent Drapers' Hall, it is a joyful day of beautiful shopping, seasonal treats and wonderful company. Entry is £12 per person with a "three tickets for the price of two" offer until 22nd November. To book use this link

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The Next Rung, by Guild Member Chris Simmance. Published 19 January – pre-orders available.

I build AI systems for a living, which is the awkward part, and probably the right place to start.

The company I run puts an AI assistant into professional services firms. Diary, inbox, meeting prep, the follow-up nobody gets round to. All of which used to be somebody's first job. Not the whole of somebody's first job, but enough of it that when a firm buys what I sell, the next junior hire quietly doesn't happen. Nobody announces that. It just doesn't happen.

That's the book. It's called The Next Rung and it's out on 19 January with Practical Inspiration Publishing.

The argument is that we have been here before and it was fine, and the reason it was fine has gone. Farms to factories, factories to offices, offices to screens. Every time, there was somewhere for people to go, and the ladder held because the bottom of it kept getting rebuilt faster than the top of it got automated. What is happening now is that the bottom rung is the bit going first. Which means that the people who would have climbed onto it are not standing anywhere in particular.

The part I did not expect to spend a chapter on is mortgages. A lender stress-tests you on the assumption that if you lose your job, it is you losing your job. Individual, unlucky, recoverable, the market carries on around you. That is how the models are built and it is how they have always been built. Somewhere north of half a trillion pounds of UK lending sits on professional-class incomes, and if a slice of a profession goes at once rather than one person at a time, the models have nothing to say about it.

There is a City thread running through it as well. Livery companies exist because trades needed a way of bringing people up through them, apprentice to journeyman to master, and the whole arrangement assumed there was a bottom to start at. Guilds were the answer to a question about entry. The question is back.

The book has endorsements from Sir Rod Aldridge, Sir Alastair King, Peter Cheese and Andrew Pullman, among others. It is a paperback.

Pre-orders are open now at **thenextrung.co**. They matter a bit more than they sound, because a pre-order counts in the week it is dispatched rather than the week it is placed, and that week is publication week. So, an order in November lands where it is useful.

If it is of interest to anyone in your firm who is trying to work out why they no longer seem to need to hire at the bottom, that is who I wrote it for.

Guild Member – Chris Simmance

Bistro 365 at Founders' Hall – dates for 2027

Bistro 1365 — Founders' Company

10 February
10 March
14 April
12 May
9 June
7 July
15 September
13 October
10 November
🎄 **Christmas 2027 Dining:**
8 December
15 December

The season of *mists and mellow fruitfulness* is upon us, Advent is around the corner, and Christmas will be here before we know it.

Venla and I look forward to seeing you at the events before then and wish you all well.

Kate Pink
Clerk to the Guild of Freemen of the City of London