



HABERDASHERS' HALL

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Front cover:

'Yorick and the Grisette', by Gilbert Stuart Newton illustrating a scene from a haberdasher's shop for a chapter called 'The Gloves, Paris' in Laurence Sterne's 1768 novel 'A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy.'

Right:

St Catherine of Alexandria: Great Virgin-martyr and patron of the Haberdashers' Company since 1407. Her statue, today blessing the spiral staircase, originally graced the Company's 17th century barge.



HABERDASHERS' HALL

an organisation steeped in history with a forward thinking approach

Steeped in the ceremony of its illustrious past and still employing the expert governance of a Master and Beadle, Haberdashers' Hall conveys both historical gravitas and solemnity. This fine establishment is the home of one of the Great 12 London Livery Companies and shows its ancient lineage alongside the inspiring contemporary architecture of Sir Michael Hopkins. The Haberdashers' Company – the eighth City Livery Company in precedence – has existed for more than six-hundred years. In the 21st Century, it ranks among England and Wales's most eminent charitable benefactors and founders of schools. It also retains historical affiliations with units from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force.

The Worshipful Company of Haberdashers originated as a medieval fraternity which gathered at St Paul's Cathedral. Its first surviving ordinances, regulating London's clothing trade, were recorded by the Mayor's Court in 1371. First incorporated in 1448, the Haberdashers' Company adopted Saint Catherine of Alexandria as patron. A Royal charter later permitted the Company to own land. It constructed the first Haberdashers' Hall in Gresham Street in 1459.

Queen Elizabeth I granted the Company's full achievement of Coat of Arms and Crest in 1570, its field of wavy lines implying ocean-wide commerce. However, by 1650, London's population had increased to 350,000 inhabitants impeding control of the haberdashery trade. Instead, as the Company's raison d'être in trade waned, so its charitable and educational patronage waxed.

The original Haberdashers' Hall burnt down in the Great Fire of London, 1666. The next was destroyed in an air raid, and the third was replaced in 2002 by today's magnificent New Hall, situated between vibrant Smithfield Market and St Bart's Hospital. Opened by Queen Elizabeth II, the architectural design of Sir Michael Hopkins is intended to reflect the medieval roots of the Company's past. Strength is personified by the magnificent oak timbered halls and benevolence by generous proportions and graceful meeting rooms.

Underlying is the ethos of tradition and change, which is woven into the very fabric of this exceptional establishment.

Livery company (noun): Companies of the City of London descended from the medieval trades guilds.

Catherine wheel (noun): A firework named after Saint Catherine of Alexandria, who was tortured on a hooked wheel.



a composed courtyard garden in the heart of a dynamic city

Leaving behind vibrant West Smithfield and entering Haberdashers' Hall through grand iron gates, one discovers a haven of equilibrium. The contemporary cloistered Courtyard offers calm gardens in which to unwind and host gatherings, from more informal meetings to receptions. At the heart of the grounds is a centrepiece, whose sound floods the senses. Sculptor, William Pye's cascading fountain depicts, 'The Three Steps to Becoming a Freeman' and bears the fitting inscription, "To NOURISH the ART or MYSTERY of HABERDASHERS and our CITY of LONDON."

Stepping into the Orangery, the ambience alters, as history unites with modern architecture creating a more eclectic mood, perfect for discreet functions. An entire wall of windows illuminates lists of contributors to rebuilt halls, from the 17th century to the present. These are displayed in carved show-cases alongside inspired contemporary artworks by Haberdashers' pupils.

The Three Steps to becoming a freeman: One may acquire "freedom of the company" by: "patrimony", if a parent was a liveryman of the Company; by "servitude", if one has served as an apprentice in the trade for the requisite number of years; or by "redemption", if one pays a fee.



Sculptor William Pye's bronze fountain, 'The Three Steps to becoming a Freeman' represents the bountiful flow of charitable contributions from Freemen of the Haberdashers' Company to their beneficiaries.



Haberdashers' Hall abounds with artistic masterpieces.

Far left: The picture of St Catherine of Alexandria was painted by Timothy Widbourne in 1975 and hangs in the Luncheon Room.

Left: An antique carving of a winged double angel finished in gilt showing the Company Arms, 1446 and 1503.

Old masters hold court for modern masterpieces

The Committee Room, Court Room and Luncheon Room are three highly versatile function rooms, equally befitting private meetings, lunches or conferences. They easily form a suite for conventions and symposiums in conjunction with the larger hall.

The Committee Room accommodates board meetings of up to 18 members. Its glazed ceiling offers natural daylight, whilst in the evenings, stained glass panels depicting Haberdashers and Feltmakers are illuminated. Here paintings of earlier masters and relics from former halls contrast powerfully with contemporary architecture.

The interconnecting Court Room is a dramatically, democratic space with a semi-circular table, suiting delegate meetings, receptions, theatre style lectures and even cabarets. The present day resides here alongside the heraldic as the Haberdashers' Crest is woven into the carpet as a centrepiece.

In the Luncheon Room, time stands still and ancient doors open to modern hands. The atmosphere suits intimate dinners, discreet buffets, receptions or board meetings for 18. Silver candelabra light up wood panelling and the ancient table – originally from the old hall in Gresham Street - leads the eye to a marble fireplace. St Catherine of Alexandria presides over the room.





grand spaces that draw attention to detail

The Reception Gallery, overlooking the Courtyard garden, exudes light and space suggestive of an indoor-outdoor area. This affords an intrinsic versatility for functions at all times of year, whether receiving guests before dining at summer weddings or Christmas parties. Grandly measuring over 30m long, 180 people can easily be accommodated.

Haberdashers' Hall reaches its climax in the magnificent Livery Hall. A generous and adaptable space for splendid occasions, it fits 300 for receptions, 200 for buffets and 120 for dinner dances. Although entirely contemporary, it bears a striking resemblance to medieval Banqueting Halls. Its timber walls embody strength; its vaulted ceilings advocate optimism; its ancient *objets d'art* lend both beauty and gravitas.



impeccable service complements the fine dining experience

Setting the table in the Livery Hall with meticulous attention to detail is as fundamental to the Haberdashers' Hall staff as ensuring that every guest experiences sumptuous dining with impeccable service. The award-winning catering team of Chester Boyd is managed by an Executive Chef, with whom you can discuss your personal dining requirements. The Chester Boyd team takes pride in creating bespoke events including food tasting, butler service, canapés for 350, standing fork buffets for 200 and seated five-course banquets for 188 guests.

Nowhere else will you experience such exacting service harmonising with opulent 21st century surroundings, nor such a fine balance of culinary expertise and ambience. That's because Haberdashers' Hall is wholly unique.