

Looking backwards – looking forwards, or: A leap into the Company Archives

The Company Archives team is delighted to announce the online publication of some recent research into our fascinating history. Thanks to the initiative of 'Records of London's Livery Companies Online' (ROLLCO) we have been provided with a full, professionally created database of our Company's Apprentices and Freemen from the 18th to the beginning of the 20th century.

ROLLCO is a project managed by The Institute of Historical Research at the University of London and several other City Livery Companies have also taken advantage of its services: Clothworkers, Drapers and Goldsmiths, to name but three. Information gathered from City records has been transcribed into a database, which is open for all to peruse – and intriguing reading it makes! Do check out the Musicians' listing at londonroll.org and see who was enjoying membership over 200 years ago. What is surprising is that comparatively few were professional musicians. Other trades and professions outnumbered them significantly! Its associated blog is at: blog.history.ac.uk

Next, our Archives team (Liverymen Dr. Frances Palmer and Emma Ryder-Richardson and Freeman David Herbert) will create a database of all past Company Liverymen, as recorded in our Court Minute books. This will undoubtedly be a labour of love and in the next *Preserve Harmony* we shall tell more about the progress of this project. The information that is being gathered about our past membership will prove invaluable to researchers, genealogists and, of course, to Company members; it is all publicly available and we hope that it will be studied and widely used.

As a taster of the next stage of our research, here is a glimpse from the earliest surviving Minute Book from 1772, showing the names of those who 'stood in our shoes' 240 years ago!

Pastmaster PAUL CAMPION

Detail of the Minutes of 29 July 1772

Discharge on the Payment of Fifty Guineas

Livery 256 William Andrews was this Day at his own Request admitted to the Livery of this Company and paid £5.7.6
- Wollen Draper St. Dunstons

Livery 257 William Syster was this Day at his own Request admitted to the Livery of this Company and paid £5.7.6
- Hide-Suit Bloomsbury

Livery 258 William Morley was this Day admitted to the Livery of this Company and paid £5.7.6
- Hide-Suit Bloomsbury