

RECEPTION FOR HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2016

Speech by the Master, Miles Jenner

Your Royal Highness, Wardens, Past Masters, Members of the Court, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Sir, it is a tremendous honour to welcome you back to Brewers' Hall. It is thirty-two years since you chaired a meeting of the Court of the Mary Rose Trust here. I believe you had made your first dive on the wreck ten years previously and, as President of that Trust, you have continued to actively promote the objective of reuniting the Mary Rose with her extraordinary collection of artefacts. Tonight we also welcome you to the Livery of the Worshipful Company of Brewers.

The Brewers' Company dates back to the 12th Century and, by the 15th Century, its members were occupying a hall on this site. Today, it remains close to its trade admitting only those who have a direct relevance to it. It would be true to say that you burst upon the brewing scene with the dawning of the new millennium and have maintained a sustained presence ever since.

In **2001**, you not only coined the phrase 'The Pub is the Hub' but also inspired the organisation of that name through the auspices of Business in the Community and the Rural Action Group. Today it continues to operate as a guide, providing an independent sounding board with a wealth of experience and local knowledge, that enables rural pubs and communities to reach common goals. It has had an immense impact and has grown in stature to influence both regional and national policy. As a result of this initiative, many pubs remain at the very heart of the communities that they have served for centuries.

In **2002**, having been photographed on numerous occasions with a pint of beer in your hand, the All Party Parliamentary Beer Group named you 'Beer Drinker of the Year'. Implicit within the award was the assertion that you had done more for the pub, and especially the rural pub, than anyone else that year. The citation read "By associating himself so boldly and positively with the campaign he launched, he has raised the serious and desperate concerns it addresses to a new and admirable level of public awareness."

In **2003**, you ventured into brewing when Wychwood Brewery was asked to brew 'Duchy Original Ale' using Plumage Archer malted barley from the Highgrove Estate. The range of Duchy beers now extends to four different styles. All are produced from blends of finest organic malts and hops, resulting in well-balanced and flavoursome beers.

It is a tradition of the Brewers' Company that the Master supplies beer during his year of office. Tonight we are proud to serve your Duchy Ale as well.

I am reminded of Shakespeare's Henry IV part 1 when one of your predecessors confronts Hotspur, at the Battle of Shrewsbury, with the lines

'Two stars hold not their orbits in one sphere,
Nor can one England brook a double reign
Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales.'

If I might parody the Bard,

'Two beers hold out a pleasure that is rare,
Now can we Brewers drink a double gain
Of Harvey's Bitter and your Duchy Ales.'

I have concentrated on your direct association with our industry but there are other ways in which you have enhanced the lives of individuals working within it. One of my own employees, while

training with us, left to undertake a Joinery Apprenticeship through the Prince's Foundation. He subsequently returned with the confidence that experience and qualifications bring and is now our brewery carpenter. It is his work you saw in the display cabinet of members' beers on our landing. There are many positive influences that you exert to help the youth of this nation and it is fitting that we have many young people here tonight, representing both military affiliations and educational initiatives that this company is proud to support.

Our educational remit extends back to the sixteenth century and has grown in diversity and purpose. Of our historic endowments the most significant bears the name of Alice Owen, who entrusted the governance of her Islington School to the Brewers' Company in 1613. Now in Potters Bar, Dame Alice Owen's School has a national reputation for achievement and academic success. It is a source of great pride that it has twice received recognition from the Prince's Teaching Institute that you established to improve the quality of teaching in schools. In 2011 it was awarded the Prince's Teaching Institute Mark and, last year, featured as 'School of the Week' on the front page of the Prince's Teaching Institute website. A key focus of your initiative relates to enrichment in education and, in 2015, the school was highlighted for its rigorous English programme that included Shakespeare, Chaucer, grammar, library use in lessons and innovative enrichment activities.

I would like to conclude by thanking the musicians who have entertained us this evening. They are all pupils at Dame Alice Owen's School. A remarkably talented ensemble, whose skills and outside interests make it all the more remarkable that they have time to function as an accomplished string quartet,

Sir, on behalf of us all, thank you for honouring us with your presence here tonight.