

Leathersellers' Review

— 2022 — 2023 —



THE
LEATHERSELLERS



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MASTER'S WELCOME



What an honour and privilege it has been to serve as Master of this Company, and in particular to be the first lady to hold the role.

A huge thank you to all our Court members, committee chairs and members, school governors, and the Clerk and his executive team for all their hard work and effort, which has enabled us to continue our long-term vision and define our purpose across our portfolio in support of charity, education and leather.

The main role of the Master and Court members is to ensure that we pass on the Company to our successors in at least as good a condition as, if not better than, that we inherited. I'd like to think that we have managed to succeed in this aim with a few notable achievements.

This year we managed to complete a very complex redevelopment of 3 St Helen's Place, which is now partially let and completes the refurbishment of the street that we call home. It is hoped the extra income generated can enable the Company to increase its giving to the Foundation, which in the last year has made significant progress on the development and strategic focus of its grant making portfolio: namely, the prevention and mitigation of Adverse Childhood Experiences, advancing social mobility, and supporting a sustainable British leather industry.

Assigning a responsive grant-making fund was also part of the strategic development of the Foundation's giving, and it was because of this that we were able to approve and roll out £200,000 to help our grantees cope with the cost-of-living crisis and to launch a breakfast club at the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools. It was also fantastic to see the continuation of the Colfe's School scholarship programme, which enables some of the bright young minds of the future to access the resources and opportunities that the school offers.

We also helped to support people working in the UK leather industry and celebrated leather as a material, from tanning, leatherwork, and the skills of the artisan, to heritage and conservation.

The spectrum of grant-making support for individuals across charity, education and leather mean that our Leathersellers' Alumni community is constantly growing. We will continue to encourage meaningful connections across this group of talented and diverse individuals and will look to them as not just an opportunity to recruit new members, but also as a source of inspiration in our endeavours to advance our work.

My warmest congratulations to the 2023–2024 Master, Mark Williams, who I know will enjoy his year in office, supported as ever by our members and staff.

CLERK'S INTRODUCTION



This year was truly historic as the life and work of the Company was overseen by our first female Master. The Master, her Court, and Committees have continued the long tradition of stewardship of the Company and Foundation.

This includes both the financial resources — evidenced this year particularly by the successful redevelopment of 3 St Helen's Place and the transfer of the Foundation's portfolio to a new fund focused on both strong returns and ethical investment — and the resource embodied by our membership, deep partnerships, and increasingly flourishing alumni network. We have continued our thoughtful process around defining the Leathersellers' approach and strategy for the future, acknowledging the profound links between the Company and the Foundation and how these might be strengthened further. Considerable work on our communications has been in support of this and we have defined our approach, both historic and contemporary, as one characterised by Compassion, Endeavour, and Independence. Our enduring charitable legacy has informed decisions across the philanthropic portfolio this year, from our response to the cost-of-living crisis and its impact on our partners, to the way in which we engage with our grantees.

This engagement is also informed by our focus on excellence in our approaches and practices (not to mention at inter-livery sporting events). Our freedom as an organisation and a funder, rooted in 600 years of heritage, allows us to adapt and innovate in support of causes we care about, and we have seen the impact of this on many organisations and individuals this year. This has often been on display as we have opened the Hall to our partners, enabling them to engage with us and one another. Highlights would include our Link & Learn, Alumni and Scholar events as well as some inspiring guest speakers at grantee dinners. Numerous charities and educational partners have also used the Hall to train staff, convene, and raise further funds.

The amazing opportunity, and at times challenge, of the Leathersellers is the range of its activities. Our own work is augmented by our historic role and partnership with the wider Livery and City community where shared endeavour in areas such as social justice, sustainability and philanthropic purpose are so valuable; and by collaboration with other funders and institutions, including the UK leather industry ranging from tanning to craftsmanship. Along with myself, I know that the Company's members and the dedicated staff team look forward to continuing this work in the year ahead.

NATURAL ASSETS





At a trailblazing micro-tannery in Fife, a dynamic duo is reviving the lost art of traditional Scottish tanning.

Left: Peter Ananin, Founder of Woodland Tannery
Below: Apprentice, Lisa Krause



The bucolic surrounds of Cupar in the former Royal Burgh of Fife is not a place that you would associate with industrial activity. But its gently undulating landscape conceals a rich history of leather tanning that is testament to a pre-industrial age when cottage industries and locally sourced materials weren't just niche, 'sustainable' ventures, but the norm.

The area's leather-making heyday has been consigned to the history books, but on the edge of the Falkland Estate – the former playground of Stuart monarchs – a forward-thinking micro-tannery is quietly striving to reignite the trade.

Woodland Tannery was founded in 2017 by Peter Ananin, who grew up in rural Aberdeenshire where his father worked as a forester. Ananin would often accompany his father during his daily rounds of managing the land and its animals. "He would regularly get called out to dispatch deer that had been hit on the road. We would administer the last rites to the animal, giving it a final meal before he gave it a clean, humane death," recalls Ananin. "As a child, I remember thinking it was a shame that the hides went to waste – we often buried them in the woods. Sadly, everyone in the area had forgotten how to tan them".

After studying design at Dundee's Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, these childhood memories prompted Ananin to start reading about old tanning methods, leading

When you enter through the aged-wood stable door of the building, a rich tea-like scent pervades the air.



him to establish his first tannery in Dundee in 2015, where he made his own equipment by rewiring old washing machines. At this time he travelled to the Methow Valley in the US state of Washington to study traditional tanning methods. "Some of the older, sustainable tanning methods like oil, smoke and bark tanning have survived in the US and Canada, whereas they have been all but lost in the UK due to large-scale mechanisation. My time there really progressed my knowledge," he recalls.

On his return to Scotland, Ananin moved his tannery to the current Falkland Estate site, where he set up in an old stone stable. The move here was strategic; it was a stone's throw from an organic, field-to-fork farm with an on-site abattoir that processed farmed deer, providing the key raw material for the business that in most other locales would go to landfill.

When you enter through the aged-wood stable door of the building, a rich tea-like scent pervades the air – a mix of sweet green and a deep English breakfast brew. It is emanating from the various simmering vats, which are filled with tanning solutions derived from local oak and willow bark. Tanning tools are scattered on surfaces, and further inside there are sunken pits containing pickling solutions and lime for loosening hair on skins. The building is very much off-grid, so Ananin installed recycled solar panels to provide power. It's testament to his ideals for ensuring that the business is as circular as possible in its operations. "Our methodology focuses on utilising waste materials from farming and forestry to produce high-quality leather and actually nourish the landscape" he explains. The deer, goat and salmon skins tanned at Woodland are all by-products from land management culls and the food industry, while the wood bark used for the tanning solutions is waste from the timber trade and basket makers.

The business has thrived and has supplied a wide variety of clients with its artisanal products, from bark-tanned leather for traditional Scottish sporran makers and sheepskins for the BBC series "Outlander", to deer leather for Whyte & Mackay whisky distilleries and rawhides for drum makers throughout Europe.

Income increased by 50% from 2021–2022 and to help meet demand, Ananin has recently taken on an apprentice, Lisa Krause, who started at Woodland Tannery in January 2023. Krause, who was born in Germany and raised in the Netherlands, studied environmental philosophy before spending several years globetrotting. During this time she went on a wilderness immersion trip to Norway, where she worked with traditional tanner, Lynx Vilden. "I learnt the basics of bark tanning fish skins – and I was hooked! I became really interested in preserving ancestral wisdom for modern times". After completing a Master's in environmental education at Edinburgh University and settling in the Cairngorms, Krause came across Woodland Tannery. "I was led there as it's one of the very few traditional tanneries in Scotland. Peter's work and use of traditional techniques really inspired me to deepen my knowledge of the craft and learn to work with the materials of the land."



The three-year apprenticeship will see Krause hone her skills in a wide range of techniques, including bark and oil tanning, liming and preservation methods. Peat bog tanning is also on the agenda – an ancient method that involves submerging hides in naturally occurring peat bogs for six months to a year. It was once commonplace in Scotland and Woodland Tannery presents it as another string to its ecological bow.

A typical day for Krause at the tannery begins with discussing the day's agenda with Ananin, before prepping. "I'll often start with setting up scraping beams and tools needed for fleshing. We will flesh salted hides for a few hours, then wash and hang them to drip before they go into the lime," explains Krause. After hanging the hides in the drying room, Krause will apply treatments for other hides at different stages of the tanning process, from trimming to washing, to pickling and submersion in the bark solution vats.

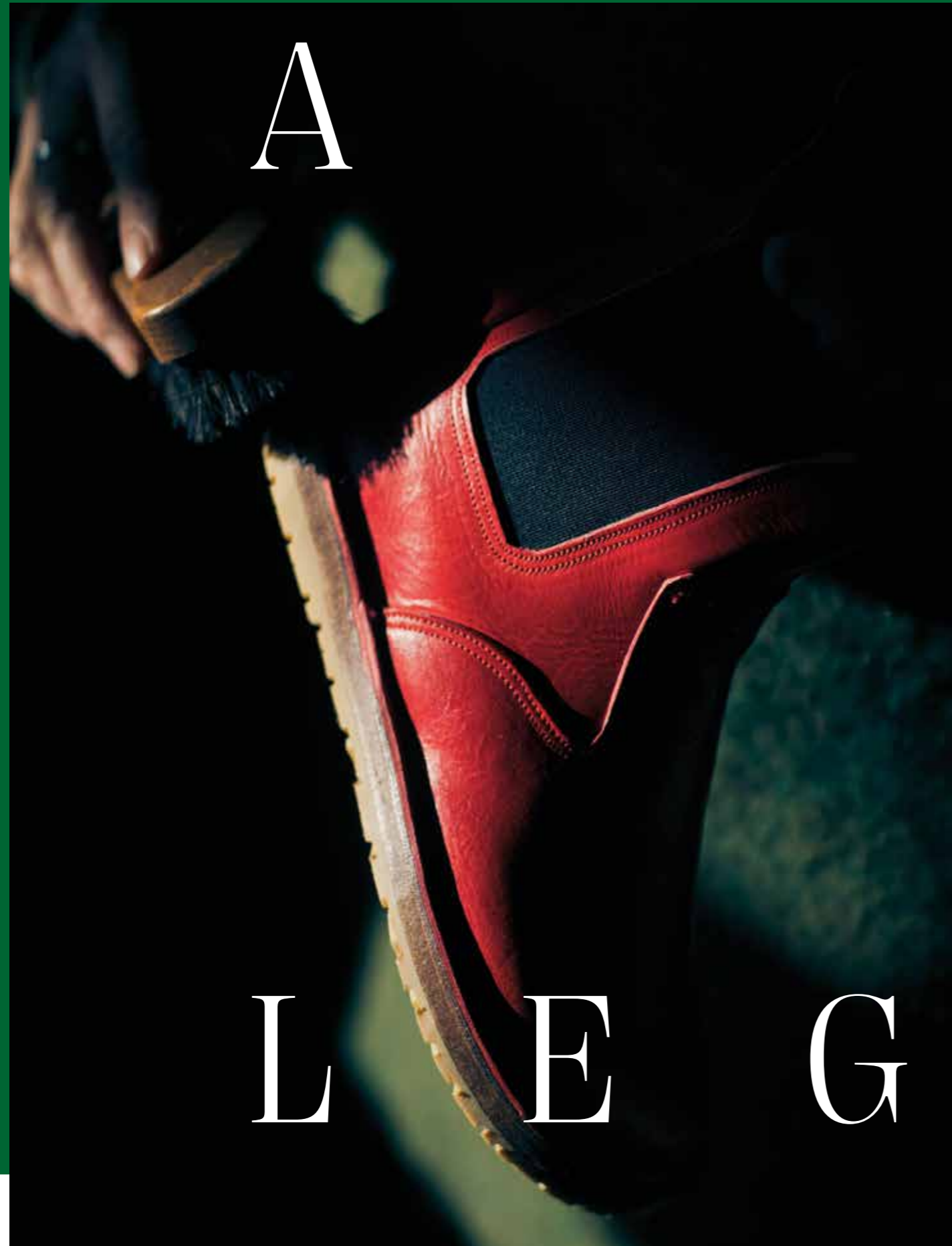
Of course, such a role is not without its challenges. The rural location of the tannery building, and its age, means that it is often cold in winter and the work is physically demanding. But for Krause, these hardships are balanced by her deep interest in the environment and working in tandem with nature. "Being close to the land, not sitting in an office and using my hands to transform something that would go to waste into a beautiful piece of leather, rawhide or buckskin is incredibly rewarding," she says. It's a way of thinking that has seen a resurgence in our increasingly digitised society, where a day's work is conducted by tapping a keyboard or swiping a screen, without anything tangible to show for it.

For Ananin, being a small, agile business means it can more easily adapt to the current climate – an attribute that recently came into its own after the economic fallout from Covid-19 caused the closure of the farm and abattoir next door. This lack of access to raw material has necessitated a move to new leased site near Kenmore in Perthshire, where a local abattoir supplies deerskins. Ananin's long-term plan is to purchase a piece of land in the area and establish a permanent facility for production and education. "It would allow us to produce a full range of sustainably tanned leathers, including peat and bark leathers, to showcase our principles and products," he says.

As for Krause, she also hopes to establish her own traditional tannery in Braemar, and the desire to pass on the skills she treasures is part of her philosophy, too. "I'd love to have a bigger space myself to set up a micro tannery and teach others the skills in workshops."

Through their love of traditional craft skills and sheer determination, this enterprising pair is sowing the seeds of a future in artisanal tanning that is perfectly aligned with the very modern concept of going back to nature.





A

LEG

LASTING

The timeless quality of leather and the skills inherited from her teacher come together in every pair of Ruth Emily Davey shoes. It is this unique combination that defines her craft.

ACY

Aged 18, Ruth Emily Davey, of Red Shoes, didn't think she would become a shoemaker. "I was fresh out of art college and didn't really know what I was going to do next," she recalls, "but I was open to possibilities, and I didn't want to go to university because it felt like it was too constrictive. I wanted to do something hands-on."

Then along came a serendipitous moment and an opportunity that led her to take up that very same job title she had been ambivalent about in the first place. She met Alan James Raddon, a family friend and self-taught shoemaker, and it changed her life in a way "you don't realise until afterwards. We just kind of bumped into one another." It was 2005 and he was 60 at the time, without children and "loosely" looking for an apprentice.

Ruth – who describes Alan as having been a bit of a "marmite character" – started a Saturday job with him, which became two-to-three days a week, then full time. She would catch three buses to get to his home-cum-workshop by the sea, in Aberarth, working other jobs to fund her time there. She recalls being handed a scalpel, pen, apron and a mug of tea on her first day and being told "You're going to make a pair of shoes today"; it started straight away.

Fast forward nearly 20 years and she's so glad that it's become her career. "I think with any craft it takes a while to grow with it" she explains over Zoom, providing a tour of the workshop as she does so.

A historical building in the Welsh market town of Machynlleth, it has been a year-long renovation project with the introduction of a shop in early March this year.

On one wall there is a homage to Alan's work, as well as some of her own designs. There is the leather room; and there are her apprentices busy at work.

Margo Edwards started her apprenticeship with Ruth in 2018. She had been working in the café next door to Ruth's shop, having just finished an art foundation course, and was unsure what her next steps might be – "Until she offered me an apprenticeship," says Margo.

"We ended up getting on well and became friends as well as apprentice and master. I fell in love with shoemaking immediately," she says. She enjoys the ethos behind Ruth's shoes: that they help to heal feet and are long-lasting.

Besides Margo, there is another apprentice, JB, who works on orders while Margo does fittings.

Ruth's own apprenticeship was five years. Alan – who counted Emma Thompson, Billy

Ruth's own apprenticeship was five years. Alan – who counted Emma Thompson, Billy Connolly and Alec Guinness among his customers – taught her how to make shoes initially, but also encouraged her to get her own clients.

Connolly and Alec Guinness among his customers – taught her how to make shoes initially, but also encouraged her to get her own clients. A tiny shed at the end of his garden for £30 a week was her first workshop and got her on her way.

At first she began making shoes for friends and family, but was soon winning awards, a number for her work as a craftswoman. In 2011 she won the Balvenie Young Master of Craft Award and subsequently earned a residency in one of the Thomas Heatherwick creative units at Aberystwyth Art Centre.

Once her apprenticeship ended, she applied for a Leathersellers' QEST (Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust) scholarship, which enabled her to do further training: learning about tweed on the Isle of Lewis and training as a reflexologist. She was also awarded the Winston Churchill



Above: Ruth Emily Davey in her workshop
Right: Ruth with her team. Margo, left, and JB, right





Travelling Fellowship that enabled her to go to Mexico and Japan to learn about the passing-down of techniques from master to apprentice. This trajectory of learning was possible with the support and funding from the Leathersellers' Foundation, which helped her to expand not only her knowledge but the business. "The Leathersellers remained supportive in some way behind all of that," she says.

Ruth's shoes, like Alan's, are always flat, wide and feet-shaped. They are narrower by design at the front and feel more feminine, she thinks, and often use exciting colour. It was in 1992 that Alan came up with the "shandal", a corrective design for bunions, that became a distinctive style, still made by Ruth today (Alan died in 2021). Her shoes are built to last and to be able to endure.

"It's such an amazing material to work with," she says of leather, "but it takes time to learn

how to work with it; it's a whole journey. It has so many qualities that are suited to wearing on your feet. I believe in using leather because it's ancient and we wouldn't have got as far in life without leather."

She points out it has "a history unlike anything else" and it was "the first thing people started making shoes from". The smell, she notes, has something nostalgic about it, and people just love it.

Ruth works on a small scale. She works with suppliers in Europe and a handful in the UK, which she notes is getting harder because so many tanneries are closing. Scraps are held and used for other projects; while salvaged stock provides those interesting colours and finishes.

"I suppose it's being made to feel very useful," she says of the job, "because you're actually making something that's worn. As an artistic



person, it's quite hard to find a line of work that makes sense but is also usable and an everyday skill."

There are, she points out, lots of different ways of making shoes, and her method is not necessarily the traditional one.

Today, 80–90 percent of her work is bespoke shoemaking; it's about the experience, though you can also buy ready-made. Customers, who are both local and from far away, are encouraged to come to the shop: be measured, try on all the styles, have adjustments noted down. The whole process takes one to two hours, while the shoes will take three to four weeks. "It's a lot of drying them and setting them" she says. And in her head there are still about a million shoe designs she'd like to make.



The Leathersellers' Foundation has funded multiple scholarship awards via QEST since 2011. This targeted scholarship develops and celebrates the skills of talented craftspeople working with leather, allowing them to focus entirely on their work and training. Talented craftspeople can apply without restriction on age, origin or type of work, but they must be based and work in the United Kingdom. The latest Leathersellers' scholarship through QEST opened for applications in August 2023.



LIFE- CHANGING:

CELEBRATING THE LONG-TERM
SUCCESS OF THE LEATHERSELLERS'
SCHOLARSHIPS AT COLFE'S SCHOOL

Each Monday in term time Ejiro Ndi-Efam introduces the assembly at Colfe's, the independent day school in Lewisham. He joined the Sixth Form only a year ago but is already the school captain and a role model for younger students.

He's one of over 100 academically talented teenagers from local state schools who have been offered the opportunity to be educated at Colfe's Sixth Form through the Leathersellers' Scholarship Programme. Each year the scholarships pay the full fees for an agreed cohort of students whose families could not otherwise afford them. In the past year this was nine Year 12 and seven Year 13 students.

"I'm studying Maths, Physics and Economics, and the teaching and resources here are amazing," says Ejiro, 17. "I wasn't having the best time at Deptford Green School. I felt I didn't fit in with my peers. It was as if they were looking for a fight all the time. My mother is a nurse, and we wouldn't have been able to afford the fees without the scholarship. I'm very grateful for this programme and I hope I can go on to make the Leathersellers proud," he adds.



Former scholars can be found across the workplace and in professions such as law, engineering and medical science. A common factor is the desire to give something back, and some have joined the Leathersellers' Company as members, become Colfe's governors, or returned to their previous state secondary schools as mentors. Joseph Mafe, 27, who studied Maths at the University of Bristol and is now a qualified

Cambridge. "I'm a big fan of the Leathersellers – they have tangibly changed my life and now I do a lot of work with children who are disadvantaged from lower socio-economic backgrounds. I want to keep giving back with the same generosity that the Leathersellers showed to me," says Demi, who has a training contract with a firm of London solicitors. "Initially I was very nervous about being a scholarship

“The enthusiasm I see from these scholars is palpable; they come in with an appetite for success that is infectious for current pupils who raise their game to compete.”

accountant working for KPMG, has been a Colfe's governor for three years. He returns to his former state school, Conisborough College in Catford, to talk to students about the opportunities available to them through the scholarships and higher education. "I didn't think about what might be possible for me to do in life, or even know about Russell Group universities, before I got to Colfe's," he says.

With top grades in A-level Maths, Further Maths and Chemistry, Akin Asisi-Agiri went on to study Maths and Economics at the University of Warwick and now works as a business analyst for a global management consulting firm.

"I'm incredibly grateful to the Leathersellers' Foundation and Colfe's. I would like to think that my self-drive would have brought me to a similar position, but I can see it would have proved difficult without their support. Not just in an academic sense, because there were so many other intangibles that helped me, such as the opportunities to network with like-minded people who aspired to work in similar fields and to receive advice from the teachers and alumni to help you get there," says Akin.

Demi Cole, 26, recalls how she nearly missed out on a place despite passing the academic tests. "My previous state school was underperforming and received a very poor rating from Ofsted. It did not give me a good reference when I applied for the scholarship, but the Colfe's headteacher interviewed me and decided to give me a chance," says Demi who went on to get A*A*A at A-level.

The Leathersellers' Foundation also helped to support her while she was studying Philosophy at the University of

girl, but I found a lot of the people there are from south-east London with accents similar to mine. When I went to Cambridge later on, well that was a culture shock, but at Colfe's people weren't that different and I felt I fitted in."

The Company has had close links with Colfe's since 1658, when the governance of the latter was bequeathed to it by founder Abraham Colfe. The scholarships were launched in 2008 for the benefit of local teenagers and they also helped to widen the social mix of students at the school where 10% of the Sixth Form now qualify for free school meals, a high proportion for the independent sector.

Since 2010 the Leathersellers' Foundation has given £2.6 million for the scholarships with a further £883,000 committed over the next five years. Headteacher Richard Russell says: "It has made a huge difference. We want to be a school that reflects its geographical location and our Leathersellers' scholars bring another dimension to the Sixth Form. They are incredibly ambitious to seize the opportunities opening up to them and they raise the intellectual horsepower of the school, besides enhancing its social dynamic."

Kathryn McNeill, Colfe's Director of Development & Alumni Relations, says the scheme has become such an important part of Colfe's that it is raising money to endow the programme in perpetuity. "The enthusiasm I see from these scholars is palpable; they come in with an appetite for success that is infectious for current pupils who raise their game to compete. Our scholars greatly value things they may not have got in their previous schools, such as access to different sports and music lessons."

Teachers at local schools have helped over the years by identifying possible beneficiaries. Mahim Chowdhury, 21, a Leathersellers' scholar 2018–2020, recalls: "A teacher at my school in east London encouraged me to apply after he met a teacher from Colfe's who told him about the scholarships. At first it was a challenge because the teaching level was much higher and I was surrounded by smart people – at my old school we had 30–40 pupils in a class of mixed abilities. But everyone was welcoming and there were clinics after school to help us catch up. It made me feel like anything was possible" says Mahim, who is undertaking a four-year MSci in Natural Sciences at University College London and is planning a career in the pharmaceutical industry.

"Everyone was welcoming and there were clinics after school to help us catch up. It made me feel like anything was possible."

The scholars talk gratefully of teachers at their former state schools who believed in them, but the shortage of resources, high staff turnover and lack of ambition among their peers proved a challenge for many. Peter Tran, 21, a Leathersellers' scholar 2018–2020, graduated from the University of Liverpool with a first class BSc Hons degree in Economics in summer 2023.

"Coming from a low socio-economic background and a lower standard secondary school where many teachers were temporary and you had to teach yourself most of the time, I might have made it to university, but I would never have had the chance to study economics at Liverpool University and to work in financial services in the City of London," he says. "Besides the very high standard of teaching, it really broadened my horizons because I got to know about things

such as networking and I was able to meet alumni to get an insight into different industries," he adds.

The scholars believe that the benefits of the scheme are far-reaching, going beyond the individual beneficiaries. For example, Joy Maton, 21, now studying biomedical science at Cardiff University, is partnering with her former secondary – Greenwich Free School – to provide online and in-person tuition. "I have a love of learning and I want to pass that on and show what it can do for you. I'll always be grateful to the Leathersellers' Foundation because the scholarship helped me to recognise myself and what I might achieve. At my old school it was easy to get swayed by those around you, but my time at Colfe's gave me the confidence to follow my own path," she says.

In addition, the scholarships contribute towards greater social mobility and access to professions traditionally dominated by independently educated and upper middle class students. As a former recipient, barrister Serena Cheng KC, is herself an example of the opportunities a scholarship can offer. "They are life-changing, not only in terms of the quality of education that the scholars receive, but also the practical support they are given and the self-belief they acquire in relation to university applications, interviews and career preparation." Serena now serves as a governor of the school and is a member of the Leathersellers' Company.

"Ideally, I would want to see systemic social change which would allow all young people access to the same opportunities in the workplace." Until that happens, the scholarships are helping to bring about this change, one student at a time.

Colfe's School is one of London's oldest schools, and it has been closely linked with the Leathersellers since the 17th century when the school's Founder, Abraham Colfe, entrusted it to the Company in his will. Since the school's incorporation in 2004 the Leathersellers have served as its sole corporate member and nominate a number of members to the Governing Board in order to support continued excellence at the school. In support of social mobility, the Leathersellers provide a number

of fully funded Sixth Form scholarships to academically able pupils from neighbouring boroughs who would otherwise not have access to the opportunities offered by the school. In 2022–2023 16 Sixth Form students were supported by the Leathersellers in total across both years of Sixth Form. We also provide match funding to encourage charitable fundraising to take place at the school each year. In 2022–2023 financial support for scholarships and match funding totalled £245,000.

Photography: Paul Read



MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO SCHOOLCHILDREN IN SOUTH-EAST LONDON



At the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools in Lewisham, unrestricted grant funding is helping pupils learn, thrive, and achieve their potential.

S

chools are facing significant budget squeezes due to declining pupil funding and rising costs. There is less money to go round to pay for additional support and activities, and inevitably it is the children who are already experiencing poverty and deprivation who are the worst affected.

As part of its commitment to improving young people's social mobility, and alongside other project grants, The Leathersellers' Foundation has committed to giving £300,000 of unrestricted funds over four years to the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools. The Federation includes three state schools in South-East London: Prendergast Vale School, Prendergast Ladywell School and Prendergast School.

"By making £25,000 available to each school annually, completely unrestricted, we enable teachers to use the funds for what their students need most," says Natalia Rymaszewska, Head of Grants at The Leathersellers' Foundation. "We trust them to choose the initiatives that will have the greatest benefit."

Niall Hand of Prendergast Ladywell School comments: "As a head teacher, it's amazing to have a pot of money that isn't ring-fenced. It means we can identify the areas of most acute need within the school and buy in the services and support that will have the most impact on our young people."

The variety of approaches taken at the schools demonstrates the benefits of this type of funding. "Some projects boost mental health and wellbeing, and some provide career inspiration," says Natalia. "Others develop academic, personal, social and technical skills through outdoor

learning. The outcomes for pupils are wide ranging and universally positive."

"The support offered by The Leathersellers' Foundation is particularly valuable during the current cost-of-living crisis," says Paula Ledger, Executive Headteacher at Leathersellers' Federation of Schools.

"Many of our pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium and live in families that are at risk of poverty. Thanks to the Leathersellers' funding, we can provide additional support and experiences that make a huge difference to young people's ability to learn, thrive and achieve their potential."

Additional funding was provided in 2022–2023 to trial open access breakfast clubs for all pupils at the schools. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with staff reporting benefits related to punctuality, attendance, concentration and wellbeing. The Foundation is providing further funds to continue this project into 2023–2024 to allow schools to collect evidence of the effectiveness of the approach, which will enable future funding from the wider community.

Mental health support from Place2Be

Two of the schools are putting Leathersellers' funding towards services from Place2Be, a children's and young people's mental health charity that works with pupils, families and staff in UK schools.

Place2Be provides one-to-one counselling for young people from a dedicated mental health professional, as well as group sessions, advice for parents and carers, and guidance, training and safeguarding support for staff.

“An unhappy child can’t learn,” says Ed Coogan, Head Teacher at Prendergast Vale School, “and in the community we serve there’s a recognised level of need in terms of young people’s mental health, complicated families and ongoing safeguarding cases.”

“That’s why it’s so important for us to offer a high-quality counselling and therapeutic service on site through Place2Be. Pupils can discuss issues such as anxiety, exam stress and friendship worries, and we can support families and teachers too. Place2Be works with our pastoral leaders, enabling us to provide a holistic mental wellbeing service to our whole school community.”

During the pandemic, Prendergast Vale School saw a troubling rise in suicide ideation and self-harm among pupils. “Thanks to the support from Place2Be, we’re seeing a downward trend in the more extreme mental health concerns and crises” says Ed. “We can now focus instead on more typical teenage issues such as image and friendships.”

Breakfast clubs: fuelling young minds

In the last year, Leatherseller support for breakfast clubs has had a significant impact across the Leathersellers’ Federation of Schools.

“We’re delighted that the Leathersellers’ funding is allowing us to offer breakfast to all our students,” says Kelly Lovegrove, head teacher at Prendergast School. “That’s important because some families may not be eligible for Pupil Premium, but may still be feeling the pinch.”

“Every day, between 30–40 young people come to our breakfast club. Thanks to this initiative, pupils get to school on time, have a good breakfast, and are then better able to concentrate on their lessons.”

The breakfast club also offers other benefits. “It gives young people a safe space at school, because some don’t have that at home” says Kelly. “In addition, it’s a very nurturing environment. Pupils can play board games together and get to know people from other year groups, so they learn how to build positive relationships.”

Maria, the school receptionist, runs the breakfast club. “She’s absolutely wonderful” says Kelly. “She sees the children every day, which means she’s another trusted adult that young people can feel comfortable with and open up to.”



Forest School takes learning outside

Meanwhile at Prendergast Ladywell School, the Leathersellers’ funding is supporting a variety of projects, including a forest school. This is an educational approach that maximises the benefits of learning outdoors.

“The Leathersellers’ grant has enabled us to engage an external forest school provider who comes in to help our students engage with the environment and work scientifically and creatively to solve problems,” says Niall Hand, Head Teacher at the school. “Every year group from Year 1 to Year 6 gets a day of provision each half term, which works out at six times a year.”

“We’re very lucky that our school backs onto Ladywell Fields, which has the River Ravensbourne running through it.”

“Before Easter, Year 6 students were working outside exploring the amount of energy required to use Roman-style pulleys. At the same time, Year 4 pupils were looking at the water cycle in the River Ravensbourne, investigating whether water ran faster on the inside or outside of the channel.”

Raising aspirations

Funding from The Leathersellers’ Foundation is also supporting a basketball coach at Prendergast Ladywell School and two initiatives that aim to raise young people’s career aspirations.

Through Future Frontiers, students in Year 10 are teamed up with employees at City companies, where they receive career information and guidance. This scheme is aimed at students who receive Pupil Premium or who are under-performing and need an extra boost. “This year, we’ve seen a half grade improvement in maths for this cohort on average and a 50% reduction in sanction points,” says Niall.

The school has also engaged with The Brilliant Club, a charity that supports less advantaged students to access the most competitive universities, and succeed when they get there. “This programme challenges our young people academically and inspires them to engage with universities” says Niall. “In the past, postgraduate students from Oxford, UCL and Warwick University have met with our students, talked about their research and encouraged them to present their own university-style research projects.”

“This really improves students’ written communication and deeper learning skills. We’ve seen that 69% of students on this programme apply to highly selective universities, compared to 47% of those who aren’t on the programme.”

Immeasurable benefits

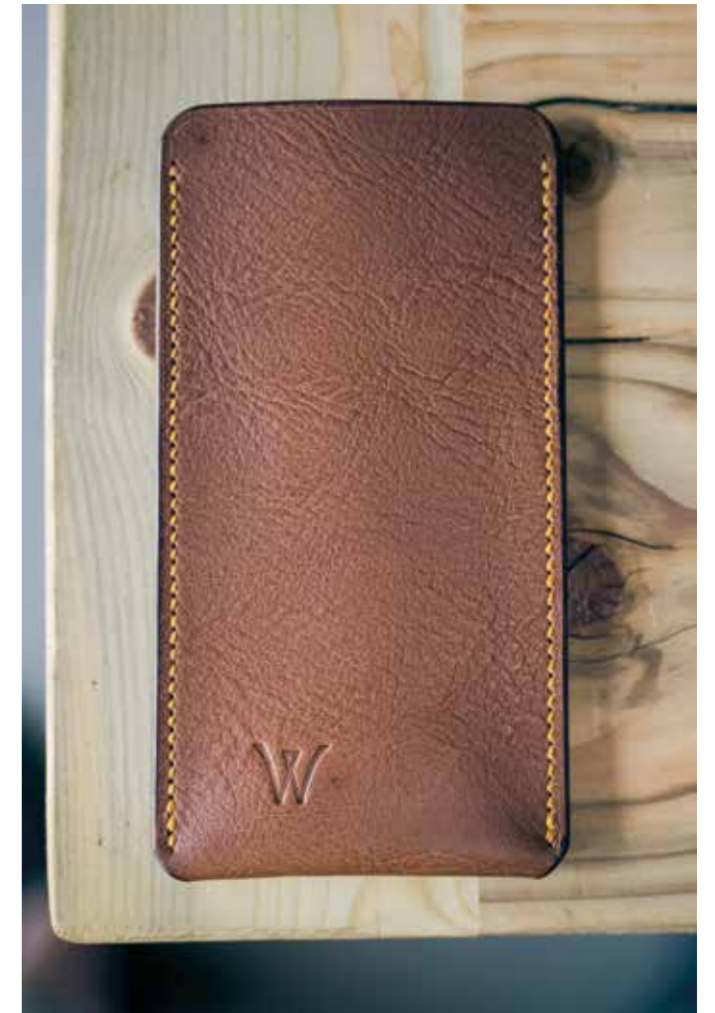
The last word goes to Kelly Lovegrove of Prendergast School. “We can of course see the impact that the initiatives funded by Leathersellers have on our pupils’ attainment. But in many ways, you can’t measure the benefit of something like free school meals and mental health support. They make our young people feel safe and valued, and that’s something that will stay with them for a very long time.”

BACK in the saddle





For Katy Warriner, learning the skills of leathercraft goes beyond the act of making. Leather acts as the catalyst to inspire and engage people about its essential place in the story of sustainability.



Katy Warriner is full of enthusiasm about all things leather. “I love my tool board” she declares, turning and gesturing to an expanse of wall behind her that is covered in useful, handcrafted, and in some instances, quite historic equipment (she thinks around 100 years old). She pauses a moment to enjoy it all once more.

To an outsider the said wall is imposing and intriguing, and certainly makes for a more impressive backdrop to her West Devon-based workshop than a spare bedroom which, up until last August, is what she had been using as her base. “I wanted to start running workshops and I couldn’t really ask people to pay for a weekend bag-making workshop and then take them upstairs to my spare room,” she laughs. To be clear, at the time it wasn’t actually being used as a spare bedroom; it had been turned into a dedicated workshop.

Warriner is a self-taught leather artisan making bespoke pieces and accessories, but for her that is just one side of the craft. She is just as passionate about the concept of traceable leather; keeping the skills, tradition and industries that are part of its world alive (she points out that tanneries in the UK are under threat, which alarms her greatly); and promoting the relationship between the farmer, the soil and the end product, which she feels is not understood properly in the farming-and-food chain, let alone the farming-fashion chain.

"Farmers don't have a place in the story of leather, they don't, they're completely ignored," she says, "so there's this massive disconnect between people understanding that this fibre that I'm working with was once an animal that needed the farmer and the ground to raise it, which for me is where this whole story begins. I want to be a voice on all of these things."

The aforementioned workshops will begin with two hours or so of explaining leather and its intricacies to her wannabe bag-makers, the statistics that go with it, and its relationship to a wider network, before tools are picked up and bags are made.

Leather has always been a part of Warriner's life. She was a professional horse rider when she was younger and recalls her mother having great leather boots, but her most vivid memory is perhaps going to see "Lord of The Rings". "I was 12 years old when it came out and I had always been obsessed with saddles," she says. "They were just beautiful things." In the film, there is, she pinpoints, a specific scene where Liv Tyler is on her grey horse being chased down as she gallops through a forest. The close-ups of the bridles and saddlery prompted her to tap her mother on the shoulder and declare: "I want to make saddles for film and TV."

A saddlery scholarship followed, but then, aged 18, she decided to travel instead. Leather would come calling again some 12 years later, however. She had owned a pair of boots which she had worn and worn, lived in and laughed in, adding some gaffer tape fixes of her own along the way. And when they finally succumbed to all the wear and tear, she couldn't find a cobbler anywhere who would fix them.

"It's time to make a difference," she recalled thinking. "I want to work with my hands." So she treated herself to a two-day leather-working course and "it just made sense to me." She saw the tools, "ancient tools", which just spoke to her – and ever so slightly kicked her in the proverbial teeth for not having originally followed through on this plan all those years before.

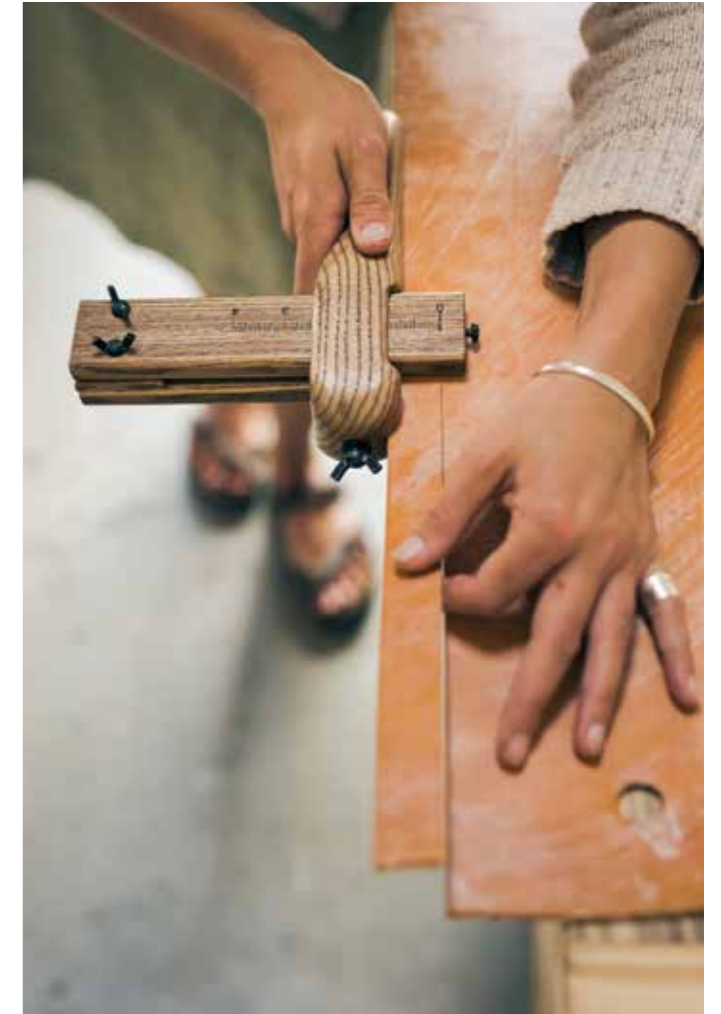
She spent the next three to four years learning about leather through books, YouTube and trial and error. A trip to a tannery highlighted the challenges facing the industry, and she started to think about the need for traceable leather, which she had trouble finding at the time. She knew that leather was a by-product of meat but didn't think, given the elevated end status of the material, especially in fashion, that its actual value was fully understood and recognised.

"I love the making but I want to be that pot-stirrer," she says. Beyond issues with traceability, she found there to be a need for conversations surrounding regenerative agriculture, crafting community and culture. Her style and making ethos echo these principles and is traditional, simple and elegant. She is more or less happy to make anything (a belt takes three to four hours, a small bag half a day and a bigger one two days-plus) but will not budge on the leather element in terms of her template for working.

If someone wants a pink leather bag, for example, it's a no. "I want to use leather that comes only from British animals," she says, "and is tanned in the UK using only British bark." For that reason she uses J&FJ Bakers, Britain's only remaining oak bark tannery, which has traceability. She does not want to use leather that has come from another country. "I feel that it is wrong to be shipping hides around the world when we have such an incredible tanning industry in the UK," an industry that, as she points out, is now quite small, "but we still have a few traditional tanneries and I support Bakers in everything they do."

Her dream is to become a Master of her craft and, per Liv Tyler, wants to achieve this via training in saddlery. The Leathersellers' Foundation has supported her with this via a one-off flexible grant. This certification means a lot to her as does training with certified Master Saddler Mark Romain. To gain this status she would have to acquire City and Guilds qualifications, then work as either a bridle maker or saddler, or within the leather craft trade, for seven years, as well as enter competitions and be recommended by two Masters – a process which normally takes ten years. "Without having that Master status behind you," she says, "fewer people will listen." For Katy, learning leather craft is just as much about the story to be told on the other side.

"I'm not doing this to further my career," she asserts, "I'm doing this to help the future generations that are going to come after us."



Leather has always been a part of Warriner's life. She was a professional horse rider when she was younger and recalls her mother having great leather boots.

Katy was one of eight students directly supported by the Leathersellers to study a leather-associated course at university or college in 2022–2023. These courses cover a range of subject areas, from use of leather in fashion and design to material conservation, PhD studies and the detailed techniques involved in saddlery that is Katy's longstanding passion.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH IN CHESHIRE EAST



The work of Visyon, a charity for young people, shows the power and potential of community-focused approaches in helping to mitigate the effects of a 'pandemic of anxiety' and the suffering caused by Adverse Childhood Experiences.





“We’re providing something vital that’s often missing from young people’s lives” says Beverley Goodwin, Therapeutic Client Team Leader at Visyon. “We take the time to listen to children and really understand what’s going on for them.

“In today’s busy, fast-paced world, teachers rarely have time to listen to children. And even well-intentioned, loving parents often don’t have time or feel out of their depth. Visyon provides that listening ear.”

How Visyon supports children and young people

Visyon supports the emotional health of children, young people and their families in Cheshire East by offering counselling, mentoring, creative groups, therapeutic groups and parent support. The charity was set up in 1994 as a community response to three local adolescent suicides, and now supports around 1,600 young people a year.

Visyon offers one-to-one counselling for young people aged 11–18, which typically involves six to 12 sessions. Its Wellbeing Team provides a mix of one-to-one and group support to young people, including mentoring and creative sessions.

Meanwhile, the Families and Communities Team offers support to families and parents, as well as training for schools.

Dealing with a “pandemic of anxiety”

Post Covid-19 and in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, Visyon is seeing a “pandemic of anxiety”, which is manifesting in a sharp increase in demand for its mental health services.

“Following the pandemic, many children have found it hard to go back to school and carry on as before,” says Sam Ruck, Head of Therapeutic Services at Visyon. “Many are struggling to cope.”

“The cost-of-living crisis has added to the pressure, too. The families we see often don’t have money for holidays or days out. Some of the lightness has gone from life.”

“Before the pandemic, nationally one in nine young people were likely to experience mental health issues. Now, that figure has increased to one in six. At Visyon, in 2018, we were logging 29% of the young people we saw as ‘at risk’. By April 2020, that had jumped to 50%. Now it’s 61% of the young people we see.”

Self-harm and suicidal thinking on the rise

It’s not just the numbers of young people at risk that are growing. Visyon is also seeing a change in the issues presented and the age groups affected.

“We’ve really noticed a difference,” says Sam. “The most common issues are anxiety, relationships with friends and family, pressures from school and self-esteem. But we’re also seeing an increase in reports of self-harm and suicidal thinking. Before the pandemic, the average age of children who were self-harming was 15–16 years old. We are now seeing an increase in self-harm in the 12–13 age group.”

Helping to prevent and mitigate Adverse Childhood Experiences

The Leathersellers’ Foundation has recently provided funding of £15,000 a year for four years for Visyon, as well as an additional £15,000 in recognition of the cost-of-living crisis.

The Foundation has given this funding as part of its commitment to tackling Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs are a recognised set of traumatic experiences, such as abuse. When young people experience multiple ACEs before the age of 18, it has a lifelong impact on their future life chances, physical and mental health.

“Focusing our charity main grants on ACEs, a high need area, means our funding is changing the lives of some of the most at risk children and young people in the UK” says Natalia Rymaszewska, Head of Grants at The Leathersellers’ Foundation.

“Evidence shows that an individual with six or more ACEs has a life expectancy that is 20 years lower than average. The intensive support and interventions provided by charities such as Visyon can break that cycle, giving that person a lifetime of greater opportunity ahead.”

Helping Emily cope with social anxiety

Emily, 15, is one of the young people in Cheshire East who has benefited from Visyon’s services. When Emily was experiencing struggles with social anxiety and panic attacks, her doctor referred her to the charity.

The Visyon team from left to right:
Amy Page, Fundraising Assistant; Chrisie Neuman, Business Support Team Leader; Harriet Whiston, Business Support Officer (HR); Linda de Sá, Fundraising & Marketing Manager

Emily talked to a trained advisor in Visyon's Initial Contact Team, who put her in touch with one-to-one and group support.

"I attended some anxiety workshops and met other young people like me" says Emily. "It helped me learn ways to help myself when I was feeling anxious. I was also offered some counselling appointments where I could talk more personally about my anxiety and panic attacks."

Alongside this, Emily's parents took part in Visyon workshops and webinars, which gave them a better understanding of how to support their daughter with her anxiety.

As a result of Visyon's support Emily has gained confidence and coping skills. She says: "I achieved my goal of wanting to feel more confident going out with friends."

Planting seeds of support around young people

Beverley explains how Visyon's work helps create a supportive network around young people. "Everything we do plants little seeds of support that help young people to thrive" she says. "It could be one-to-one counselling with the young person, webinars for parents or training in schools."

"We run training workshops for teachers and educational staff on mental health and wellbeing, working in a trauma-informed way and helping children to build their resilience."

"All of our work comes together to build a supportive environment around the child."

Funding from Leathersellers is enabling Visyon to help prevent and reduce the occurrence of the long-term negative consequences of ACEs by providing therapeutic services to children and young people.

As well as paying for part of Beverley's post as Therapeutic Client Team Leader, the Leathersellers' grant is also funding training for Visyon staff in ACEs and working with children and young people using a trauma-informed approach.

In addition, the funding has enabled Visyon to offer training to other organisations across Cheshire East. "I'm really pleased that we've developed a full-day training session that's going out to education staff, the police, health professionals and social workers," says Beverley. "It means we can cascade knowledge to the wider community that will support children and young people."



Core funding makes all the difference

The Leathersellers' funding is particularly valuable to Visyon as it is flexible and not tied to a particular project, which is relatively unusual in the grant-giving world.

"It's so important to us to have unrestricted core funding," says Sam. "It means we can use the Leathersellers' grant for different areas such as training, safeguarding and risk management, which are vital to our charity. We're able to become a resource for other professionals in the areas where we work and to share that expertise much more widely."

"There aren't many funders like the Leathersellers. They're so collaborative. And the fact that it's multi-year funding is amazing as it helps us to plan ahead."

Theresa Pass, Visyon CEO, comments: "The Leathersellers really engage with those they support and they understand the challenges the sector is facing. Offering opportunities to meet other funders is invaluable in raising awareness of what we do, particularly as a regionally based charity. The Leathersellers are leading the way in helping the sector to develop services by thinking beyond project-based and short-term funding."

Future plans

Looking ahead, Visyon plans to devote some of the Leathersellers' funding to training its staff in dealing with vicarious trauma and supporting the parents of children under 12 who are self-harming. It's also delivering training in the wider community on the 'Trio of Vulnerabilities', where a young person lives in a home where there's poor parental mental health, substance misuse and domestic violence.

As Sam points out, "By upskilling our team, parents, and our community, we can improve many different touchpoints so that children and young people get the help they need when they need it most."

A photograph of two women in a tannery. They are standing in front of large racks of animal skins. The woman on the left is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, and is looking down at a piece of green skin. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt and dark pants, and is also looking down at the same piece of skin. The skins are in various colors: green, tan, and red. The background shows industrial equipment and fluorescent lights.

FROM FIELD

TO FASHION

As society wises up to the benefits of more ecological consumerism, industry pioneers are positioning leather as the sustainable material of choice.



With the plight of the planet dominating the daily doomscroll, your head would have to be deep in the sand to have missed that Mother Earth is in peril. As we work to repair the damage, consumers have become increasingly focused on the provenance, ethics and sustainability of the products they buy. Fashion labels from Paris powerhouses to high street stalwarts have responded by committing to greener production methods and initiatives to redress this ecological fallout. Prada and Gucci, for instance, have introduced collections made from recycled fibres made from post-consumer waste and salvaged ocean plastic, while Swedish label Asket aims to be circular to the last thread by providing a carbon footprint map for each garment and offering an end-of-life recycling scheme. Even fast fashion giant H&M is stepping up its use of organic fibres to lessen environmental impact.

While materials such as cotton, denim and cashmere have undergone an image overhaul to fit the sustainability bill, leather has been largely left out of the conversation. This has given rise to a glut of fossil fuel-based polymer alternatives, favoured for their 'pro-vegan' nature by brands from Stella McCartney to Zara. But a few pioneering individuals in the leather industry are taking the bull by the horns to make the case that genuine leather can be the better choice.

For Sara Grady and Alice Robinson (a member of the Leathersellers' Company), founders of British Pasture Leather, their business aims to provide transparency and a 'field to fashion' traceability for leather. Grady, who was raised in Manhattan, worked in media before becoming Vice President of Programs for Glynwood, an organisation that supports regional food systems in New York's Hudson Valley. "I really wanted to do something closer to nature and I knew that food represented the intersection of things that I cared about," she explains. Her work at Glynwood involved implementing programs to assist producers, including running a working farm as a training venue for smallholders to teach regenerative agricultural techniques that work in harmony with nature to improve the environment.

This experience opened Grady's eyes to the vast differences between holistic and industrial farming methods – particularly when it came to animal welfare. "I got a very broad education in food systems and agriculture there and realised that if we're raising animals for food with such care, we should be using all parts of the animal as meaningfully as possible." It led Grady to think about the by-product of this ethical meat industry: the raw hides. She noticed that while chefs and consumers were interested in the provenance of meat, the same approach was lacking when it came to leather, as the hides were either discarded or disappeared into an anonymous supply chain. "I came to learn, after asking numerous questions

about what happens to these hides, that it was impossible to know – despite all the care that had gone into raising the animals," she recalls.

For Alice Robinson, an experienced fashion designer, her interest in leather was sparked after taking an accessories course at university. In a similar experience to Grady, she also found leather to be a contentious material shrouded in mystery. "The conversation around leather never went any further than the species of animal it was. It was either seen as an anonymous by-product or was rejected as it was seen as inhumane. There was nothing in between," she explains. This experience, coupled with her upbringing in rural Shropshire

After being introduced by a friend who recognised two kindred spirits, Grady and Robinson came up with the concept for British Pasture Leather.

where her father was a farm vet specialising in livestock, made Robinson want to understand more about how leather makes it from the farm to a finished product.

As part of this, for her degree collection Robinson purchased a sheep from a local farm, sent it for slaughter and designed a clothing capsule using the entire animal, from the skin to the wool fibre. She even served the meat at her degree show, which raised some eyebrows. Later, Robinson accompanied a long horn bullock on a similar journey to create her collection for 2019's *Food: Bigger than the Plate* exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum, which had a zero-waste approach and highlighted that the hide of the animal was often sent to landfill or disappeared into the ether.

After being introduced by a friend who recognised two kindred spirits, Grady and Robinson came up with the concept for British Pasture Leather, which provides a tangible link between the animal, the parties involved in leather production and the end consumer, throughout every step of the chain. The basis of the model is animal welfare; Grady and Robinson work with Pasture for Life, the certification body for farms

where livestock feed solely on organic pastureland grass, which yield healthier meat and have a lower carbon footprint in their rearing than grain-fed cattle. Grady and Robinson's business forms that vital line of communication between the farmer, the abattoir, the hide collectors and finally, the tannery.

A major hurdle at the start was finding a tannery to work with that aligned with Grady and Robinson's ethos. They found a solution in Bristol-based Thomas Ware – a vegetable-tanning firm founded in 1840, which uses tree bark solutions instead of synthetic chemicals and coatings. As a result, British Pasture Leather's end

“Fundamentally, we're trying to ignite a systems change of how we value, produce, procure and work together”.

product is a natural, high-quality material, which is entirely traceable. “Fundamentally, we're trying to ignite a systems change of how we value, produce, procure and work together,” states Robinson.

This idea of utilising waste material from the food industry was also the catalyst for Jack Millington's business, Billy Tannery – the UK's only micro-tannery focused on goat leather. Millington grew up on a dairy farm in Leicestershire and after becoming disillusioned with a career in marketing, decided to do something more practical – and it was his agrarian roots that provided the answer. “I didn't actually want to farm, but I thought there was a way to apply my business experience to the field. Then this brainwave hit: the milk and meat from the goats on my father's farm were sold, but nothing was done with the skins – they were binned as there were no tanneries that dealt with them,” says Millington.

Realising that the small herd on the farm wasn't capable of supplying enough material for the business, Millington searched for a supplementary supplier and, via Twitter, began speaking to James Whetlor of Cabrito Goat Meat Ltd., the UK's biggest supplier of ethically produced goat meat. He also found an ally in Professor

Paul Evans of Northampton University, who taught Millington tanning techniques at the university's tannery. After purchasing second-hand equipment Millington set up in a shed on his family farm. They have since moved to a new farm 25 miles away, but this site is similar: just two tanning drums and a drying and dehumidifying room make up the operation, which until recently, Millington ran singlehandedly. It produces the only entirely traceable goat leather in the country.

The initial business model was focused purely on tanning, but Millington soon realised that a finished product range would add significant worth to the venture. “With sustainability being such a hot topic, I realised it would have a lot more value if I was able to tell the story from the sourcing, right to the final product,” he explains.

Despite the hardships of the pandemic, business has been brisk and the tannery has seen such significant demand year on year that Millington is now looking for a larger site to scale-up the business. He has also started tanning deerskins, much of which come from land management culls – but remains attached to the advantages of goat hides. It has a softness similar to lamb leather, but with more heft and durability. “It's incredibly supple and is really versatile. As a small hide, you can also be more flexible with how you work with it, as bigger cattle hides need more technical equipment,” he says.

Like Robinson of British Pasture Leather, Millington also believes that leather has been effectively demonised in certain circles. For him it's not about placing blame, but about celebrating what is great about leather and improving its transparency to provide an option with better values at its core. “The leather industry has been really distracted by the vegan movement. They've been on this defensive push instead of focusing on the positives of natural leather and showing how it can be traceable and ethical.”

As for the future, both British Pasture Leather and Billy Tannery have plenty to keep them occupied. Grady and Robinson have worked with New Balance, Mulberry and shoe designer Tabitha Ringwood, which all produced prototype items from British Pasture Leather material for 2022's London Design Festival, and the pair are in increasingly frequent talks with big-name leather labels keen to enlist their expertise.

Billy Tannery has already collaborated with Northampton cordwainers Grenson and Goral, bringing goat leather to the attention to a new generation of footwear fanatics, while a partnership with motoring giant Lotus was launched this July for Goodwood Festival of Speed.

What's clear is that if the current trend for knowing what you're putting on your plate – and on your back – continues to gather pace, things are going to get even busier for these forward-thinking leather champions.



Above: Jack Millington assessing leather with apprentice Mark, a former brewer whose role at Billy Tannery has been supported with a grant from the Leathersellers' Foundation
Left: Jack Millington, Founder of Billy Tannery



Alice Robinson is a new member of the Company, having been made a Freeman in the most recent Livery year, but her connection to the Leathersellers and her commitment to leather stretch back further. Originally supported by a leather student grant to complete her Master's at the Royal College of Art, the Company then supported Alice and her business Grady + Robinson for their London Design Festival event highlighting the links between leather as a material connected to land, farms, food, tradition, craft and design within the UK. She also mentors a student through the Alumni Network mentoring scheme.

Billy Tannery was one of several micro-tanneries to benefit from the Leathersellers' Foundation apprenticeship funding in 2022–2023. This allowed them both to hire an apprentice with a desire to learn the skills and knowledge needed to work in a tannery, and to access an intensive leather technology course at the Institute for Creative Leather Technologies (ICLT) at the University of Northampton. There were challenges involved in recruiting a suitable candidate for the apprenticeship, but the successful applicant has been in post since March 2023 and we look forward to hearing of their progress over the coming year.

LINK & LEARN

As a Flexible Funder the Leathersellers' Foundation strives to add value for charities in addition to essential grant funding. Via events and external engagement throughout the year, the Foundation, in a variety of ways, encourages connection, collaboration and shared learning between charities and funders alike.



On 29th March 2023, 65 funded charity partners were welcomed to Leathersellers' Hall for the second annual Link & Learn event. As requested by the Foundation's grantees, the one-day event focused on ways to diversify income, with most charities experiencing significant financial hardship and difficult choices due to rising overheads and emergency Covid funding drawing to a close.

Addressing the power imbalance

Charities often say what they believe funders want to hear in fear of saying the 'wrong thing' and damaging their chance of funding. This understandable caution can prevent funders from appreciating the true challenges experienced by charities, and is something that the Foundation is working hard to address.

This year's Link & Learn event aimed to demonstrate interest and care in supporting the success of Foundation grantees through difficult times, by providing a safe space to discuss the most pressing challenges that affect their work. The Foundation is now one year into its strategy focusing on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and while the year offered many opportunities to increase understanding, it's important to recognise that the expertise lies with the grantees. It was therefore critical to facilitate cross-room discussion to learn from them and support peer-to-peer sharing of solutions and ideas.

"What I liked most about the day," said an attendee commenting on this approach, "was the genuine openness to learning from grantees displayed by the Leathersellers and creation of a collaborative relationship between funder and recipients. The event was really useful and also felt very open and honest."

Exploring solutions

Each charity the Foundation supports has experience and solutions to share with others and is at a different point of their development. By discussing a range of income streams, grantees were able to identify new funding opportunities to explore, connecting with like-minded charities with which to learn and follow up.

As one charity representative said: "From arriving, and throughout the day, everything was excellent. It was great to meet up with other groups and form future links. I enjoyed how interactive the event was, meeting people to discuss positives and challenges – all sharing ideas! It was a good combination of learning and networking in a safe and understanding environment."

Practical support

Many charities resist asking a question that they fear is obvious or elementary, but more often than not other charities are struggling with exactly the same questions. With the help of a panel of three of the Foundation's newest grantees, the Baobab Centre, Children Heard and Seen, and Sister System, it was possible to highlight collectively some of the main hurdles and misunderstandings of making a grant application.

Indeed, as a grantee says: "This is especially helpful in managing fundraising colleagues and supporting as they set priorities etc. I really found it helpful in so many ways and have brought a lot of learning back to our office."

Meeting new funders

The focus and approach of funders varies as much as the charities in attendance, so it was crucial that other funders were present. Joining the Leathersellers' Foundation as hosts were representatives of other funders from the Garfield Weston Foundation, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Prudence Trust and the Trusthouse Foundation, to share their knowledge and insight with Leathersellers' Foundation grantees through a dynamic panel and Q&A.

Following the event attendees shared a host of ideas for next year's Link & Learn, recognising that in addition to crucial funding, one of the most useful things a funder can do for charity partners is to bring them together.

This article references the Leathersellers' Foundation as a 'Flexible Funder', a term identifying us within the funding community as having pledged to work to meet the standards set by IVAR as part of their Open and Trusting Funders initiative. These eight commitments include not wasting time, asking relevant questions, being open and flexible, being proportionate and communicating with purpose. We seek to meet these at every stage of the grants process, and each grant-making committee holds itself accountable to these on an annual basis.

Photography: Clarissa Debenham



LEATHERSELLERS' ALUMNI SAHER OLIVER SAMMAN



CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND, EDUCATION AND INTERESTS?

I grew up in east London in a mixed heritage background family – I'm English, Palestinian and Lebanese. London is a fantastic melting pot of cultures, and I was immersed in the world of art and design from an early age, and which I'm very passionate about to this day. I discovered my love of leather crafts in 2007 while serving an apprenticeship with a dear friend Wolfram Lohr. He taught me the foundations of leatherwork and I continued to work with him until 2009. In 2010 I became a student to broaden my knowledge and learn the design process, which was a fantastic way to understand how many different fields and professions converge, from fashion and architecture to industrial design and film.

WHEN DID YOU RECEIVE A GRANT FROM THE LEATHERSELLERS' FOUNDATION?

I received the Emerging Talent Award from the Leathersellers' Foundation in 2012, when I graduated from London College of Fashion having studied accessories design.

WHAT DID THE GRANT ENABLE YOU TO DO? WHAT IMPACT DID IT HAVE ON YOU AND YOUR FUTURE?

I was able to attend a short course at the Institute for Creative Leather Technologies (ICLT) at Northampton University where I gained valuable knowledge and understanding of the science behind leather, far beyond the curriculum at design school. We also got to be inventive and experiment with different creative leather finishes; great fun! The ICLT is next door to the Leather Conservation Centre and the British Leather Institute, which was inspiring and gave an insightful look into the historical significance of leather.

Gaining an understanding of the technical aspects of leather was fascinating, and proved useful to me when, not long after attending the

course, I found myself in a tannery in the United Arab Emirates and was able to communicate design ideas confidently with the tanners. This enabled me to develop custom articles of leather, specific to the designs I produced during a design residency at Tashkeel in Dubai in 2014–2015.

WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK? WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?

I'm a leather modeller in costume and have been working for HBO on "House of the Dragon", the "Game of Thrones" prequel, since 2021. I produce a variety of stunning leather creations, from suits of armour made of wet moulded leather for pyrotechnics – where stuntmen are engulfed in flames – to ensuring that an actor has good visibility through a helmet with a face plate whilst riding a horse in a jousting contest. The exquisite designs, inspired by historical artefacts, are often very complex and require innovative techniques and use of materials to push the limitations of not only the key material of leather, but also of my skill as a craftsman.

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR CAREER PATH/JOURNEY?

In 2017 I founded a bag brand called Terracotta Row, making backpacks and all sorts of bags using discarded factory waste that would otherwise be destined for landfill. The highlight of the brand's journey was a collaboration with a prison reform charity. Together we delivered custom made designs to the Tate Modern and V&A for their gift shops in 2020–2021, as well as teaching workshops with young people at the Design Museum in London.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB/CAREER?

The exciting new techniques and innovative ways to use leather as a medium that arise from design specifications and client demands always enthral me, and the fact that I never know what I'll be working on next keeps me passionate and in love with my work.

FASHIONING HISTORY



Lucy Dollery

For an inspired project at Leicester's De Montfort University, students of "Artifacts Live" are drawing on the lessons of historic leathercraft to create the designs of the future.

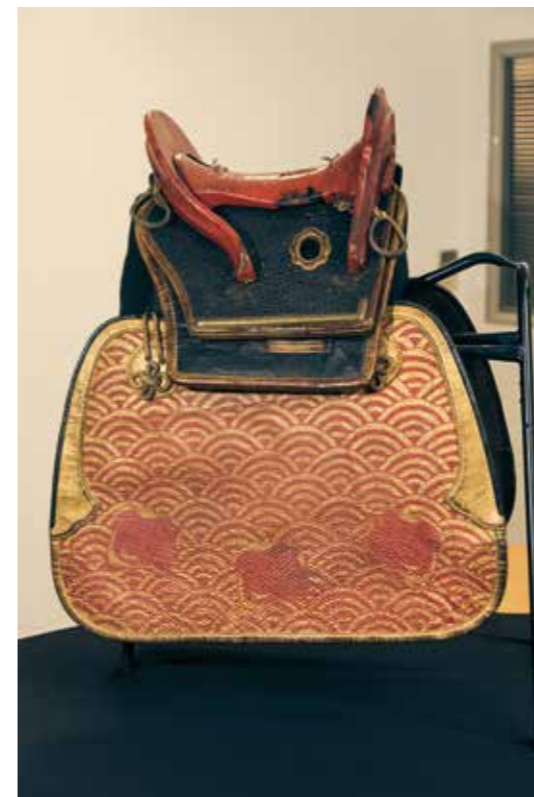
'Excellence and zeal' is the motto of Leicester's De Montfort University, one of the UK's leading lights in art and design. And one of its latest ventures, which is approaching its culmination after more than a year of development, certainly lives up to this mantra.

"Artifacts Live: A Legacy in Leather" – a collaborative effort between the university, Northampton's Museum of Leathercraft and the Leathersellers – is the brainchild of Gillian Proctor, Associate Professor, leather liaison and project instigator at De Montfort University. It sees final-year students draw directly on the heritage of leathercraft to design their grading collection.

Working in tandem with the curator of De Montfort University's museum, Elizabeth Wheelband, Proctor chose objects of varied origin and history from the Museum of Leathercraft to provide the creative stimulus for the project. "We selected 20 artefacts from the 14th century right up to pretty much the present day. Where possible we chose objects in pairs, so that there's a tentative link between them." The collection of objects included a 17th century Kyoto Samurai saddle, an 18th century Bavarian ceremonial horse harness, a Native American tunic and a 15th century Venetian gondola chair. More modern items are a 20th century lancer's helmet and 1940s water-resistant military suit developed for the Baltic campaign. This assembly was presented to the students, who were asked to select two objects each to inspire their own designs.

The seed of the idea came to Proctor in October 2022 when exploring an option to digitise the collections at the Museum of Leathercraft. "I felt we could do something even more exciting. I only like to do things that are fun and sexy," says Proctor, living up to her passion for contour fashion. She went back the next day with the "Artifacts Live" proposal.

Students from the Schools of Fashion & Textiles and Art, Design & Architecture who enrolled on the course were encouraged to work in pairs from differing disciplines. "By mixing them up, we thought it would bring a new parameter



to the project and the way it would be approached by each individual would be different – that the meeting of minds would hopefully spark fresh, innovative ideas,” explains Proctor.

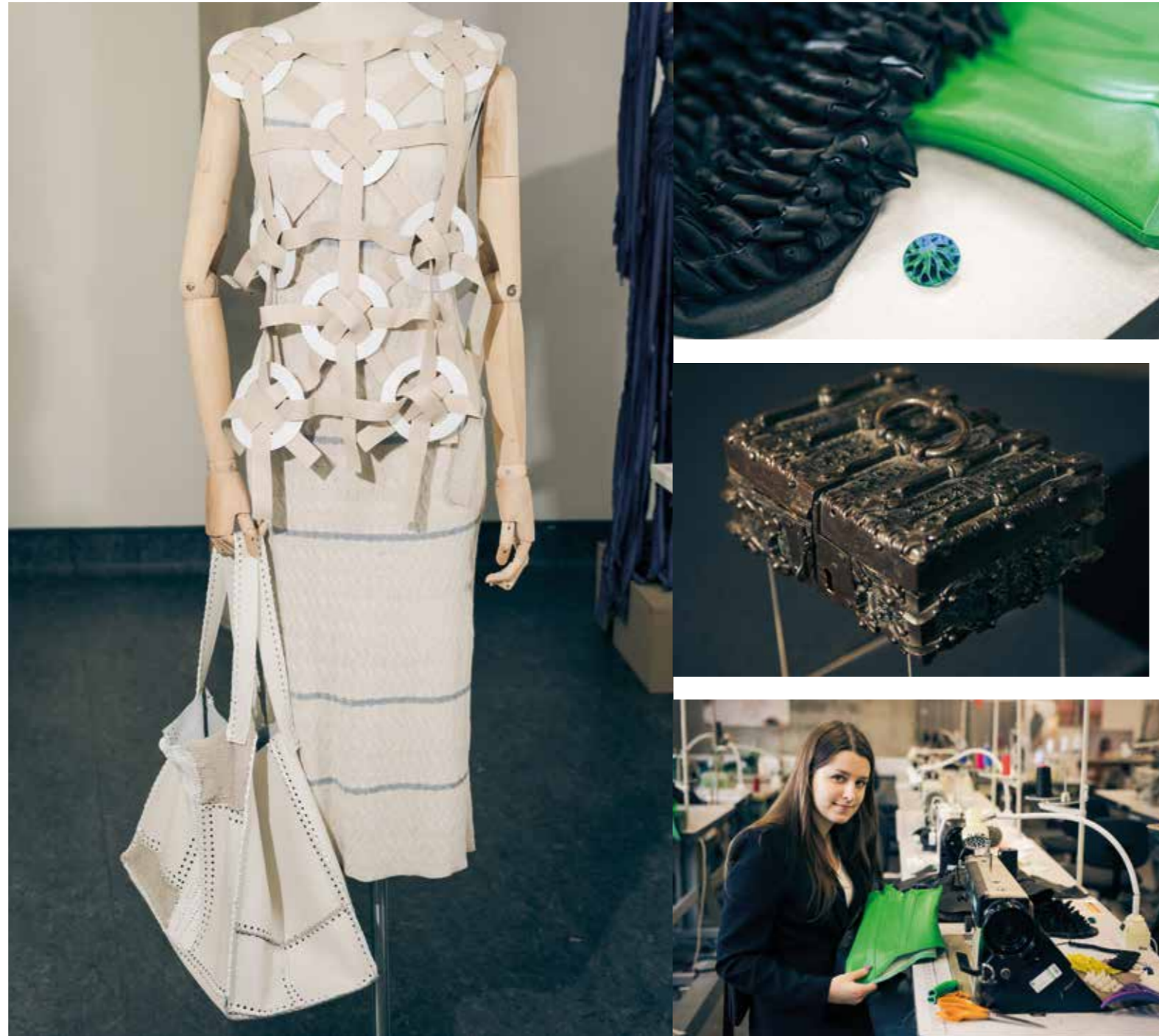
Working with the artefacts meant learning about how they were made. “The key challenge for the students has been that if they chose an object for the technique it showcased, they had to teach themselves how to do it. They’ve had to do their own research, but we’ve helped them with certain elements.”

To help nurture these skills Proctor enlisted local craftspeople like Giulia Mio, a couture milliner based in Leicester’s art and design hub, Makers’ Yard, who taught the students how to reproduce the leather flowers on a 19th century framed diorama panel from the museum’s collection.

The Leathersellers also funded field trips to three leading manufacturers for the students to hone their techniques further, including visits to the London studio of veteran leather designer and craftsman, Bill Amberg, UK tannery Pittards and the repair workshop of luxury fashion brand Mulberry. “We had to peel the students out of each place. When we were back on the coach and driving back to Leicester, they weren’t texting or posting on social media – they were completely engaged and chatting about the experience. The visits inspired a real thirst for the project – and then we let them loose on the artefacts,” recalls Proctor.

Students applied the skills they acquired to their own objects, combining them with the modern craft techniques and technologies taught at the university such as 3D printing, laser cutting, holography, electro forming, digital enhancement, moulding, embossing, AI, virtual reality and photography.

Lucy Dollery, one of the ten students involved in the project, studied Fashion Textiles, a course she picked for its practical, hands-on nature. She chose two of the equestrian objects from the selection: the Samurai saddle and the Bavarian horse harness. “I was drawn to the saddle because it has a lot of layers – there’s a gilt leather layer underneath and other layers on top that build up and a seat section which almost looks like a lacquered wood. The structure, textures and patterns were really interesting,” explains Dollery. The tactile nature of the object inspired the look of a bag she created, which features hole-punch detailing and embroidery reminiscent of the traditional Japanese *Seigaiha* wave pattern on the saddle. The Bavarian horse harness provided the stimulus for a tabard – a short coat-like garment that was popular in the medieval period. It has been woven together with strips of leather in a circular shape, echoing



Olivia Bodak





Above: Imogen Sullivan
Opposite: Ana Del Rio Mullarkey

the structure of the harness. "They're all woven and slotted through each other, which references the way the harness would have sat over a horse's head."

Also drawn to the equestrian objects was Olivia Bodak, who came to De Montfort University from her native Poland to enrol on the Contours Innovation MA, a specialism in lingerie and undergarments. Her selection of the Samurai saddle was not just for its aesthetic merit, but its symbolism. "I liked the shape and construction, but I also loved the meaning behind the Seigaiha pattern, which stands for power and resistance. I want my collections to empower women, so that was a nice link," she explains. This sense of empowerment can be seen in Bodak's lamb nappa jacket, which integrates a corseted waist with 3D-printed panels in the form of the *Seigaiha* wave. "With the harness, I really loved the combination of various textures, from the weaving to intricate embroidery and quilting," she says. Referencing this play on textures, Bodak created a 3D-printed trench from offcuts of Japanese plonge leather, prized for its thin, supple quality. It also has a corseted waist made with a quilted texture akin to pineapple skin – a homage to the moulded embellishment on the harness – while the trench's belt also incorporates the *Seigaiha* pattern.

Imogen Sullivan, who read Contour Fashion, has a background in bespoke bridalwear and wanted to bring this experience to her final collection. She found inspiration in the late 19th century moulded art panel and Elizabethan gauntlet gloves, which were embellished with pansies sewn with gilt thread. While the art panel provided structural inspiration for her pieces, it was the cultural context of the gauntlet gloves that fired her imagination. "I found out that these gauntlets would have been gifted during marriage, which chimed perfectly with the theme of my collection," she explains. Sullivan learnt to replicate the leather blooms in the class run by milliner Giulia Mio, which she applied to a pair of opera-length leather gloves and an Elizabethan-inspired corset that have a modern subversiveness not usually seen in bridalwear.

Ana Del Rio Mullarkey, who came to the university from Madrid to enrol in the Fashion Design BA, credits part of her interest in apparel design to the workshops she attended as a child at Madrid's fashion and textile museum, the Museo del Traje. Her first muse among the selection of artefacts was the miniature 16th century French strong box. "I was attracted to it because of the texture and techniques it exhibits. The leather is moulded over panelled sections, and it just had such intricate details." Del Rio Mullarkey, who likes to play on the ideals of masculine and feminine tropes in her work, was also drawn to the piece for this reason. "It's quite rough, but



beautiful because of all the detail. It has beauty and strength to it," she observes. A hand-painted leather fan was her second object of choice, which she liked for its cultural context. "It was a link to my Spanish heritage, and I wanted to bring an element of my culture into my work".

These objects led Del Rio Mullarkey to produce three leather outfits, consisting of a perforated apron dress of multi-hued vertical strips that fold into each other – inspired by the cutwork and mechanism of the fan – and an artisanal hand-quilted jacket that references the moulding of the strong box. In another nod to Del Rio Mullarkey's heritage, she drew on the tool-like support struts of the strong box to wet-mould dozens of leather cutlery pieces, which she used to embellish a skirt – an allusion to the idea of Sunday being a rest day in Spain, one in which you take time to indulge in food with family and friends. Del Rio Mullarkey's designs earned her The Innovation Award at London's Graduate Design Fashion Week 2023.

After submitting their work for grading, the students were encouraged to create additional objects for their portfolio and experiment further with the techniques they had learnt. The fruits of these labours – alongside their grading pieces and the original artefacts – will be showcased at the "Artifacts Live: A Legacy in Leather" exhibition at De Montfort University Museum from January to June 2024, which will be open to the public. As part of this there will be a continuous programme of lectures, seminars, and workshops, often presented by the individuals involved in the project.

Fashion and design are cyclical in nature and this project shows that when the rich heritage of leathercraft is reinterpreted in a modern context, the results can be truly inspired; and in the hands of this new generation of artisans, the future of leather design is sure to be one of excellence and zeal.

With a long-standing partnership between the two, the Leathersellers' Foundation supports De Montfort University with a multi-purpose grant enabling the provision of leather-related Design Awards, a summer school teaching leatherworking skills, and opportunities to connect with the leather industry and tanning process. Some of the funds are used to secure leatherworking equipment for students, and this year also supported the "Artifacts Live: A Legacy in Leather" exhibition.

LEATHERSELLERS’ MENTOR PROGRAMME

Q&A with Liveryman Harriet Stewart with insights from Ayomikun Bolaji, recipient of a Leathersellers’ Foundation student grant, on their experience of being part of the Leathersellers’ Mentor Programme.

“ I found that having a mentor changed how I internalised advice. It was quite different from how I approached my relationships with other adults in my life, i.e. parents or lecturers.

Having a mentor meant I had someone who had my back. Someone who has been through what I have been through. Someone capable of guiding me through specific hurdles I was facing as they have also faced something similar. It meant having someone who could rejoice in my success, see my progress and open me up to more and more opportunities.

It’s no secret that computer science is a male-dominated field, so having another woman in tech to speak to has been both encouraging and insightful.”

Ayomikun Bolaji

What is the Mentor Programme?

The Mentoring Programme is a way to connect the diverse range of professionals in the Leathersellers’ Company’s membership and alumni network with students who are receiving support from the Leathersellers’ Foundation. But it’s not just about helping students, it’s a co-developmental process where both participants get something out of it. The Leathersellers have a unique platform to connect people at different places in their careers and I was interested to see how I, as a member, could contribute.

What’s your professional background?

I’m a creative technologist and educator. I’m currently Co-Founder and Co-CEO at Mind over Tech. I’m increasingly aware of the less positive side of the relationships we have with technology and how our habits have changed. I enable people and companies to help individuals and families with that relationship.

How does mentoring work in practice?

The Leathersellers provided training, which covered things like safeguarding and how to get the most out of the experience. We had our first call in September 2022 and have had six sessions since, four online and two in person in Oxford and London.

We shared a bit about ourselves and discussed expectations in our first chat, the baseline of which was to be punctual and agree an agenda beforehand. In terms of objectives and knowing how much to encourage and challenge, we set SMART goals. One of Ayo’s was to go to two networking events, which encouraged her to leave her comfort zone. Building networks was also something I knew I could help her with.

What did Ayo find useful?

Ayo found it useful to seek and receive advice from someone who isn’t an authority figure. Someone who is impartial and interested at the same time. She was keen to learn more about my career journey in tech and how a broader view of technology could help when looking for a career path; mine has been a somewhat random assortment from freelancing to teaching, and because of this I know start-ups, founders, and also big tech companies. I set up calls with dozens of people to speak with her and noticed a shift in her confidence and outlook during this time. It was a joy to recognise and feed this back to her.

What have you got out of the process?

From my perspective it’s been amazing. I’m very curious about Gen Z and how tech is influencing people’s lives, so it’s been interesting to see her views on various aspects of technology and computing.

In my current job, I have three mentors and want more! What I like about mentors is that they push you to act. In some way you repay their goodwill and time by honouring the commitment to put yourself forward for the things the mentor recommends and sends your way. It’s another level of accountability.

One thing that genuinely interested me about the Leathersellers was that I had access to members, people and partners associated with the organisation and its work. I never truly understood the benefit of this until I was part of the Mentor Programme, and I would definitely encourage others to explore the opportunity if it’s available. If done right, it has incredible value.



The mentoring programme is a recent initiative of the Leathersellers’ Foundation, set up to recognise the value that our network and connections can add to the support we give university students beyond simply funds. Mentees are current recipients of student grants, a programme that has run for over four centuries and that has grown considerably in scale during this period, regarding both the numbers of students supported and the amount of funding available to them. In 2022–2023 79 students were given grants, and students can be supported with up to £5,000 a year for up to four years, although the average amount is around £3,500 p.a. The funds they receive may be used to assist with their studies and living costs in any way while they are at university.

FETE for a KING

The Leathersellers and Coronations

The Leathersellers' Company has longstanding connections with the royal family, dating back before even its incorporation by Henry VI in 1444. The Company has long been dedicated to expressing its gratitude for this royal recognition, not least by means of its coronation celebrations. Coronations are designed to be elaborate and splendid to demonstrate the prosperity and stability of the monarch's reign, and this is best exercised in its feasts and processions.

Since Richard II's coronation in 1377, all coronations have involved a procession to Westminster Abbey for the crowning and other rituals, followed by a coronation banquet. Historically,



Illustration of the coronation procession of James II, 1687

the banquet was held in Westminster Hall before a second procession back to Buckingham Palace, but since the 19th century it has been held afterwards at the Palace. The Company's celebrations traditionally followed suit, with participation in or spectatorship of the procession, or with a coronation feast with music and entertainment.

The Company's earliest documented participation in a royal accession procession is noted in the Wardens' accounts of 1483. Although the accounts record this as "the first yere of the regne of Kyng Richard the third," it is mentioned that Leathersellers "rode to fett [fete] in Kynd [Kyng] Edward the v" in his brief reign prior to usurpation by his uncle. Edward V is the first of only two English monarchs never to be crowned, but as he was absent from the City when he acceded to the throne, and owing to the tumultuous political environment, he only arrived in London on 4 May – the planned date of his coronation. As such, his coronation procession was combined with the traditional King's Entry, which celebrates the entry of the monarch to the City of London. Seven Leathersellers, including the Master and Wardens, rode with the king in this procession, dressed in livery gowns and caps.

Moving forward in time, the 17th century was a period of political and religious turmoil, but despite the frequent coronations the Leathersellers' celebrations remained generous. The King's Entry at the Restoration of

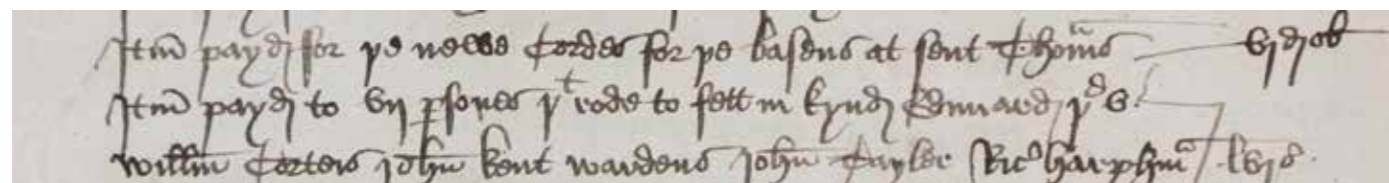
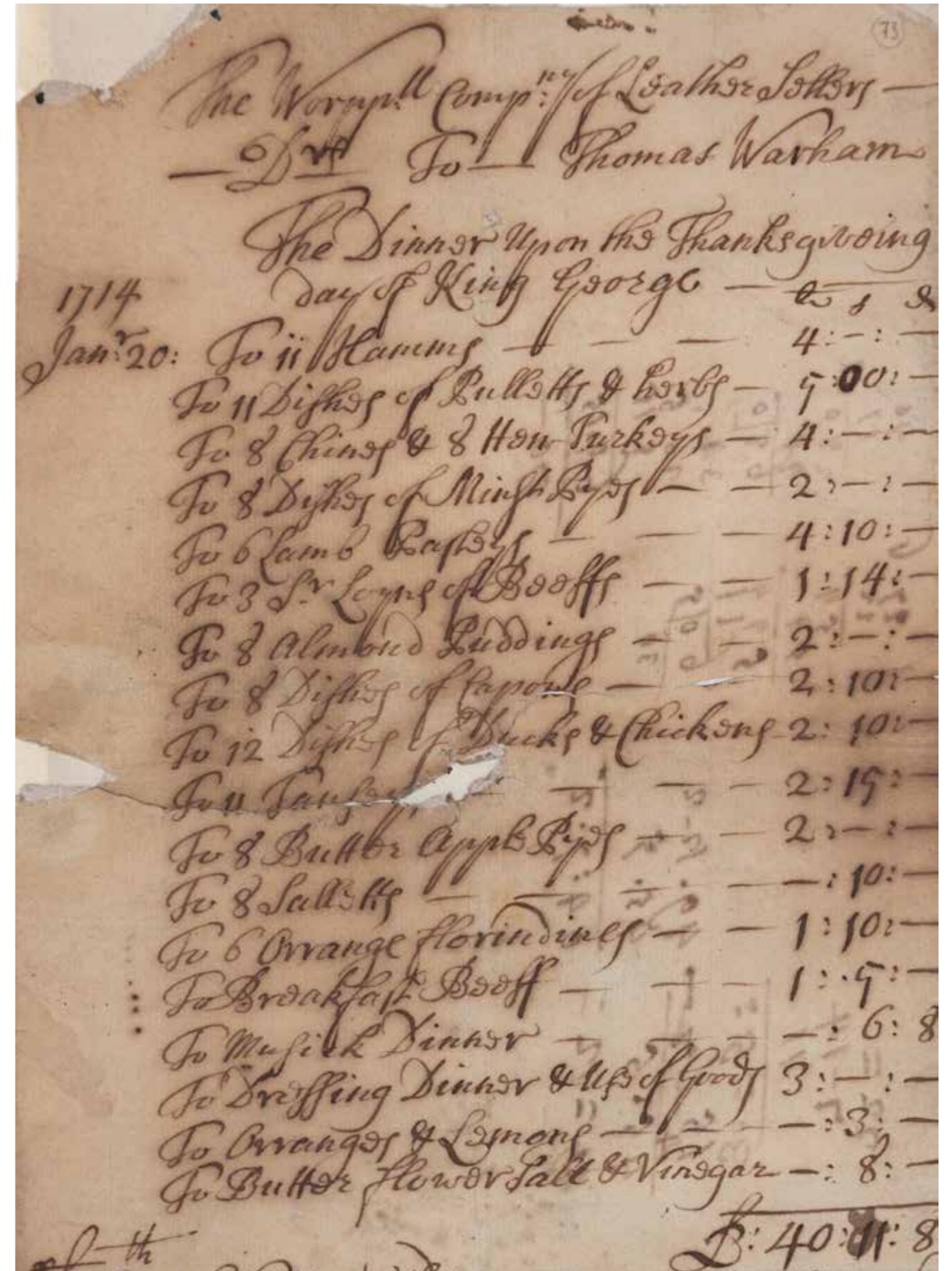
The Company's earliest documented participation in a royal accession procession is noted in the Wardens' accounts of 1483.

Charles II in May 1660 was an event of high pageantry, organised at short notice. The preparations were hurried, the Leathersellers rushing to find banners, streamers, blue cloth ribbands, and twenty "tall and comely" Liverymen to ride on horseback in the procession, with 25 footmen waiting on them, and two trumpeters. One escort, James Wroth, tried to refuse this duty and was promptly fined £5 for dereliction! The entire affair was repeated for the coronation on 23 April 1661, for which it was decided that the celebration could be no less elaborate.

Later that century, the accounts record an expensive £4 5s thanksgiving celebration on 31 Jan 1689, organised to celebrate the abdication of the Catholic James II and the accession of the new Protestant monarchs William of Orange and Mary II or, as the Clerk put it, "Deliverance from Popery and Arbitrary Power."

Although the social and financial position of the livery companies began to change in the 18th century, the Company remained eager to show support to the Crown. Its coronation celebrations became less public, usually only involving watching the official procession and holding a dinner. George I's coronation on 20 October 1714 was notoriously extravagant, and the Company felt it necessary to match that extravagance: a dinner was arranged for the Master, Wardens, and Livery to celebrate George I's King's Entry in October 1714, costing £65 13s 4d,

Right: Bill of fare detailing expenses for the Thanksgiving Dinner held in honour of George I's accession, Jan 1714/15
Below: Entry in the Wardens' accounts recording Company participation in the King's Entry of Edward V, 1483



without the musician's fee; and later, 200 seats were purchased in the stands to view the procession.

A second dinner was held on 20 January 1715 on the Thanksgiving Day to celebrate the King's peaceable and happy accession to the throne, costing £63 5s 8d, and for which still exist the dinner bills in the archives. These bills show the cost of the pipes and candles as well as the menu, which includes orange florentines, tansy cakes, six types of meat in several different cuts, such as hen turkeys and chines of beef, and 3s spent on oranges and lemons, which were exotic luxuries. The Company invited its almspeople to attend both dinners so that they could share in the celebrations.

Two hundred years later, when Edward VII's coronation was planned to be on 9 August 1902, it was decided that "a concert alone would not be suitable," so a dinner was arranged that grew to 368 invitees – so many that it

had to be split into two dinners, one on 9 July and one on 16 July. The Royal Procession was planned for 27 June, and the Company bought and haggled for 115 precious seats in a stand at St Paul's Churchyard, the event far too popular to hope for their original request of 250 seats.

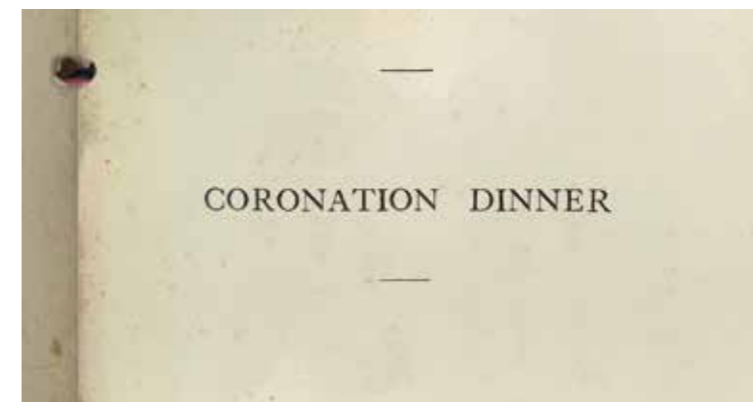
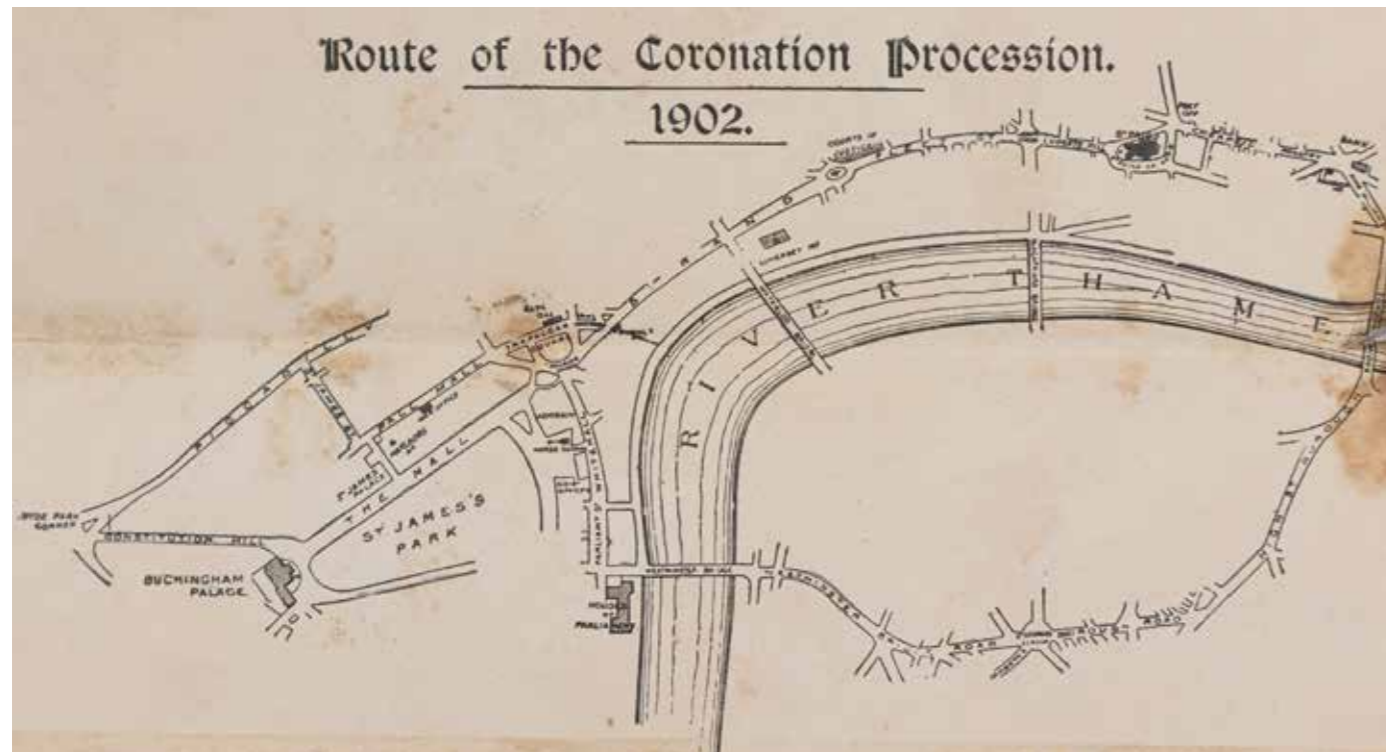
Of course, the interest in tickets was fierce, the Clerk to the Company W. Arnold Hepburn writing that "inquiries are being made here daily by Members." The Company archives have preserved several letters eagerly requesting tickets, but these letters were often in vain; assignment of tickets was determined by member seniority and, as Hepburn emphasised, "the ticket is not transferable." Ultimately, all prospective spectators were disappointed because the procession was cancelled at short notice when Edward VII took ill just days before the intended coronation date. The procession was reorganised for 25 October.

The Company held no entertainments for George V's 1911 coronation, but it did provide gifts to its members and its dependents in an effort that they might nonetheless enjoy the historic occasion. Grants were given to the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Beadle, Hallkeeper, and Office Clerks, and the Court and Livery were provided with 93 seats at St Paul's Churchyard to view the royal procession on 23 June. Seats on the Company's stand were provided also to 272 boys and their schoolmasters from Colfe's School for the second royal procession on 29 June, and they were all hosted in the Hall for a luncheon afterwards. The Leathersellers also gave £3 3s towards coronation entertainments for schoolchildren and elderly people in Barnet, and donated £10 to the Coronation Year Special Appeal of the Boys and Girls Industrial Homes at Forest Hill.

A similar feast to that for George I was organised for Edward VIII's

coronation; upon Edward VIII's abdication, George VI came to be crowned on 12 May 1937, on the day originally set aside for his brother, and the Leathersellers' Company followed form and maintained their original plans: a dinner, dance, and cabaret show on 18 May 1937 for all the Livery and one lady guest each. There were 231 attendees, the principal of whom was the Sultan of Zanzibar. All Liverymen and lady guests were presented with leather gifts, which were inscribed with 'Coronation 1937' and stamped with Company heraldic symbols to memorialise the occasion. Some of these gifts are preserved in the Company's collections. The dinner was no less festive than that for George I's coronation: a nine-course meal that included two types of fish, lamb, asparagus, peach melba, and a full wine flight. After dinner there were entertainments, which included an act by the sisters Elsie and Doris Waters, top-billing radio stars of the early 20th century.

Whilst post-war privation and the destruction of the Fifth Hall in the Blitz prevented much celebration for Elizabeth II's coronation, in 2023 the Leathersellers helped to fund the design and creation of the Anointing Screen, an embroidered dedication to King Charles III by the City of London's livery companies that featured in the anointing at his coronation. Additionally, the badge recently commissioned for the Master Leatherseller's Consort includes a commemorative coronation hallmark in honour of the King.



Opposite: Map of the route of the coronation procession for Edward VII, 1902
Above: Coronation dinner programme, 1937

WOMEN

Widows — Pensioners

Ann Foster —
 Ann East —
 Ann Jarvis —
 Ann Rolfe —
 Elizabeth Dixon —
 Ann Mackwell —
 Elizabeth Wood —
 S.H. Forbure —
 Ann Howard —
 Ann Brown —
 Lucy Purcell —
 Ann Spicket —
 Elizabeth Wright —
 Sarah Jewell —
 Elizabeth Lane —
 Ann Harris —
 Agnes Kenby —
 Elizabeth Shepherd —
 Mary Jenkins —
 Sarah Smith —
 Sarah Cook —
 Susanna White —

One Vacancy — by the death of Ann Cope — eldest on the List.

MS 1061A

IN THE HISTORY OF THE LEATHERSELLERS

2022–2023 was a historic year for the Leathersellers' Company as it saw the service of its first female Master in over six centuries, Clare Lennon, who had already previously served as the Company's first female Steward, first woman ever to serve as a Warden and first female Court Assistant. In recognition of this achievement this article explores many of the different ways in which women have been involved with the Leathersellers over the centuries, which reflects a deep, complex, and long-lasting relationship.

Opposite: List of widow-pensioners, c.1832
 Below: Entry in Registers of Apprentices showing Sarah Rands and her apprentice, 1765

Female membership

Women have been admitted to the Freedom of the Company since its earliest days. One of the earliest female Freemen whose name is known was Elizabeth Kokerame [Cockeram] who was made Free in 1489, as recorded in the Wardens' accounts, but even before that there are references suggesting that there were always a number of freewomen in the Company.

The Registers of Freemen, which begin in 1630, show that women were admitted to the Freedom through apprenticeship, patrimony and redemption, albeit in much smaller numbers than men, and that the pattern of their admittance reflected a broader pattern across the wider membership, with apprenticeship being the most common method of entry at first until being overtaken by patrimony. However, for women there was also an additional, more

Date of Induct	Apprentices Names	Masters Name and	Place of Abode	Apprentice Fees	Trade bound to
1763. July 11	1. Charles Holmes Junr.	Sarah Rands. Widow	St. Dunstons	5s	Drunkmaker
18	2. Charles Holmes	Ambrase Cooke	St. Dunstons	5s	Drunkmaker

Top: Entry for Mary Hales, Freewoman, in the Registers of Freemen, 1631
 Bottom: Ann Appleby, first female apprentice recorded in the Registers of Apprentices, 1645

unofficial route into membership: widowhood. The great majority of these widows had taken over their husbands' businesses after their deaths and therefore needed to have the authorisation to trade and take apprentices that came with possessing the Freedom.

Owing to the link between widowhood, taking apprentices and being Free, the registers of apprentices can be used to gain a fuller picture of female membership than that given in the Freedom registers. Throughout the period covered by the latter only 50 women are officially recorded as being made Free up to the 20th century, stretching from Mary Hales "a Mayd" admitted in 1631 to Mary Ann Akers who joined in 1881, but the apprenticeship registers tell of 157 women – mostly widows – who formally bound apprentices and therefore must in fact have been Free. A total of 264 apprentices, male and female, were apprenticed to women during this time, with some women binding many apprentices over the years.

Unfortunately we don't know which trades were learned by the majority of these apprentices, because this information only began to be recorded as a matter of course in 1765. In the later 18th century trunkmaking appears to have been the most common trade to learn from women, reflecting its popularity as a trade amongst the wider Company membership and apprenticeship at the time, while a couple of rarer trades represented were dealing in hams and dealing in oils and colours (paints). The female apprentices indentured to women learned trades such as millinery and sewing; the one female apprentice bound to a man during this period, Sarah Jones,

was indentured to a china and glassman. These apprentices were amongst a total of 131 girls bound apprentice to Company members during the period covered by the apprenticeship registers.

Evidence in the archives suggests that in the Company's earliest years women were occasionally granted Livery status; the Wardens' accounts record the names of two women, Janet Nightingale and Agnes Lindsay, within a list of debtors 'in the clothing' (Livery) in 1476. Indeed, it appears that widows of Liverymen were regarded, at least unofficially, as being of Livery status themselves until at least the early 18th century. The names of two widows appear in the Livery List for 1707-1708: Martha Callow, widow of Robert, and Elizabeth Hickman, widow of Abraham, who paid fees of 10d and 20d respectively. Their names also appear the following year, together with that of a third widow, Mary Portress.

After a long hiatus in the 19th century, during which only two women were made Free and none were apprenticed – reflecting changes in social mores that led to the home as being seen as the appropriate place for all but the poorest of women, rather than trade or business – in the early 20th century some support began to be shown for women to be admitted into both the Freedom and the Livery. In September 1918, the same year that women aged over 30 were given the right to vote in Parliamentary elections, Harry Hylton-Foster (Master 1912–1913) proposed, and Henry Pullman (Master 1920–1921) seconded, a motion "That the Freedom and Livery of the Company be open to both sexes on equal terms." The

Henry Rogers	by Henry Fingar	30 Junij	1631
Mary Hales a Mayd	by Redemption	9 Julij	1631
Michael Cornwall	by Thomas Taylor	12 Julij	1631

Ann Appleby daughter of Leonard Appleby citizen
 and Leatherseller of London doth put her selfe Apprentice to her said
 father Leonard Appleby for vij yeres from the day of this date
 Dat the 12th day of May 1645.

Top: Great St Helen's property lease signed and sealed by Diana Dufresnay, 1752
 Bottom: Print showing crypt of St Helen's Priory with Leathersellers' dining hall above, before demolition in 1799



motion was defeated, but the subject of female admittance was brought up again in the 1950s when the decision was made "that the ancient custom of admitting women to the Freedom be continued". Today around half of new Freemen and Liverymen each year are female, but membership is only part of this centuries-old story.

Female staff members

Women have worked for the Leathersellers as members of staff for hundreds of years. At first they worked as cleaners, waitresses and similar roles solely on an informal basis, but in 1738 a permanent, salaried position was created that was for around 170 years given exclusively to women: that of Hallkeeper and Butler. This was a formally combined post until 1927. In 1738 the duties of the Hallkeeper – Jane Sewers, widow of the late Beadle – included cleaning plate, pewter etc; keeping clean the parlour, hall and court room; cleaning the stone steps and the mermaid sculpture created by the famous sculptor Caius Cibber; washing linen; and purchasing mops, brushes and other necessities. By the 1860s the Hallkeeper and Butler also ordered ingredients for meals and meetings and paid charwomen, waitresses and work-people. Even after the Second World War, after the role of Hallkeeper had split from that of Butler, in some respects the role remained essentially unchanged. Today, women make up around half of the permanent staff members employed by the Leathersellers, and a constant that connects members and staff is the physical location of the Company and its home on Bishopsgate since the 16th century: St Helen's Place.

St Helen's Place

The Leathersellers' Company has been the owner and careful steward of land and property, in its corporate and trustee

capacities, since the 1470s, and therefore there is a long-held connection between the Leathersellers, its holdings and the people who have rented, lived or worked there over the centuries. In London Wall, St Helen's Place, Lewisham, Sydenham, Barnet, Haslemere and many other places, countless people lived their lives, managed their businesses or worked in Leathersellers' property, as some still do today. Some female tenants who appear in the records include Ann Turke, Elizabeth Whitterance, Posthuma Boulton, Mary Gery and Diana Dufresnay – the last being a wealthy Huguenot widow, resident of Great St Helen's, who passed away in 1757.

Prior to the dissolution of the monasteries and convents under Henry VIII the site of what is now St Helen's Place was the home to the Benedictine nuns of St Helen's Priory, the only nunnery within the walls of the City of London. The Priory was dissolved in 1538 and the Leathersellers acquired the freehold in 1543. While St Helen's Estate wasn't an entirely female space prior to the Priory's dissolution – the nuns would have employed male chaplains, administrative officers and household staff, such as Richard Berde who was appointed Steward and Rent Gatherer in 1535 – it was still primarily a female world, managed by a series of Prioresses from the first Mother Superior, likely named Dionysia of Flamstead, to the last, Mary Rollesley.

This changed when the Priory was dissolved and the Company with its mostly male membership moved in, but even after this upheaval women still lived in the St Helen's estate, whether as tenants or subtenants, dependants of tenants or other residents such as the almswomen living in the Leathersellers' almshouses, which were located on the estate until their residents moved to Barnet in the 1860s to join the



Below: Photograph of the almshouse residents at the dedication of their new chapel, 1926
 Opposite: A notice that widow and Freeman applicants for Company relief must attend the Hall, 1833

almshouses founded there three decades before. The names of tenants' dependants are usually missing from official lease records, and subtenants also often don't appear, but from 1841 onwards the census can be used to discover details of individual residents, thus creating a fuller picture of residency [in St Helen's Place]. While only an approximate picture can be given by the census, which is a snapshot of whoever happened to be staying in each property on the particular night the census was taken, we can see that on that occasion men were outnumbered by women; three fifths of the people recorded in St Helen's Place were women.

Almswomen

The management of almshouses is an ancient responsibility of the Leathersellers. Ever since 1543, when the Company set up almshouses for four men and three women as a condition to being given £300 towards purchase of the old Priory site, many generations of almspeople have lived in accommodation provided by the Leathersellers, first in the St Helen's Estate and then in Barnet. The Leathersellers were not unusual in providing accommodation for both men and women; in the Cities of London and Westminster nearly two-thirds of almshouses were mixed sex during the period up to 1600.

It seems that the early almspeople, female as well as male, were not passive residents. They petitioned the Company several times in the 17th century, for instance requesting that the almshouse windows be enlarged so that they could improve their livelihoods by winding silk or undertaking some similar task, and in 1678 asking for New River Water to be laid on for their use.

The almshouses in Barnet, now called Leathersellers' Close, were generously founded and paid for in the 1830s by the then



Master, Richard Thornton. The first Thornton almswomen were Elizabeth Wood, aged 80; Comfort Mary Ashman, aged 79; and Ann Round, aged 73, all three selected along with three almsmen from a field of 28 applicants.

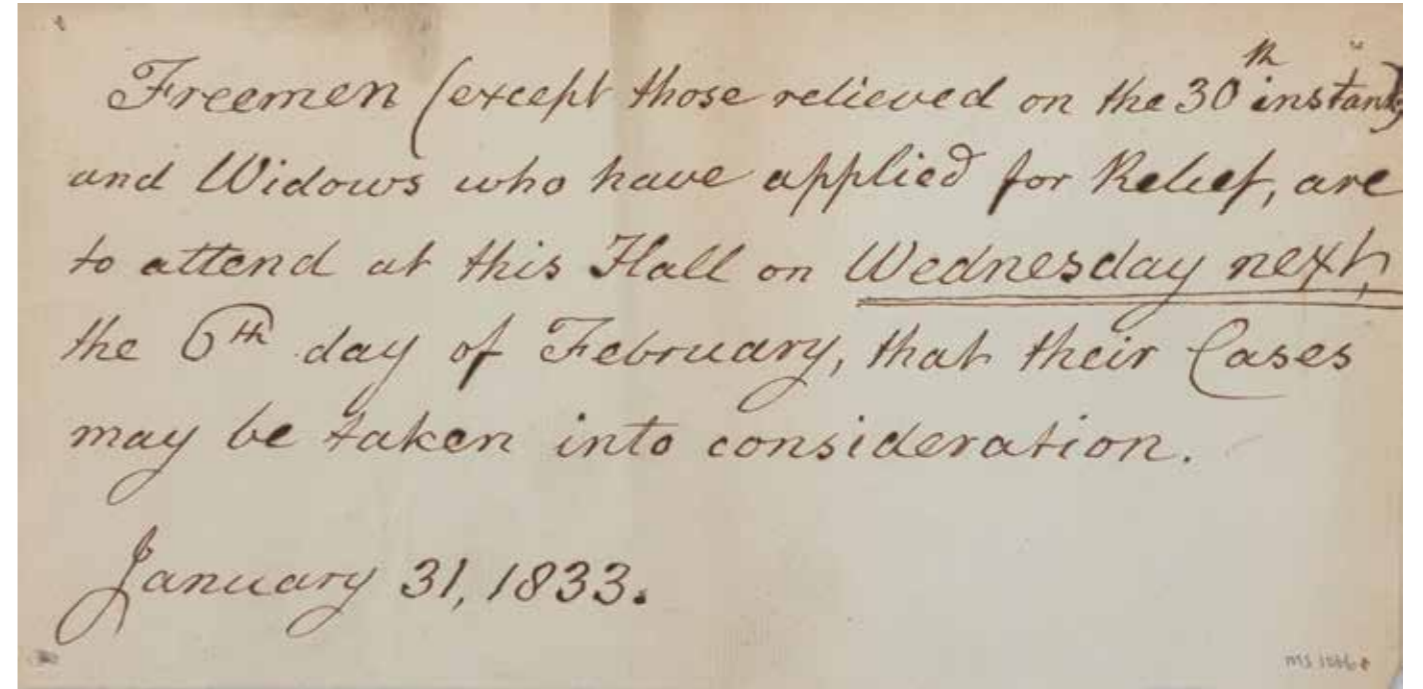
The only surviving historic photograph of the almshouse residents shows them, together with the Master, two Wardens and the Bishop of London, on the occasion of the dedication of the new chapel in 1926. This photograph does not identify the residents, but their names can be found elsewhere in the archives, so although we can't match these names to the faces in the photograph we know that the female residents shown were Mrs E. Dodd, Miss E. Wood, Mrs H. M. Jackson, Mrs C. Ford, Mrs A. E. Proctor, Miss A. E. Hunt, Mrs J. Alvey, Mrs S. J. Stevenson, Mrs E. Clark, Mrs M. A. Howard, Miss L. Mansfield, Mrs E. Rodwell, Mrs A. E. Clapp and Mrs E. J. Cadwallader.

Female benefactors

Since 1471 the generosity of numerous benefactors, who entrusted the Leathersellers with land, property and money in order to provide income to expend on charitable and educational endeavours, has enabled the Company to support individuals and communities over the ages. Although the majority of benefactors were men, two of the most significant were women: Elizabeth Grasvenor and Ann Elliott.

Elizabeth was the widow of Leatherseller Nicholas Grasvenor. She must have been popular during her lifetime because she mentioned 18 godchildren in her will of 1555, including six named Elizabeth in her honour. It was partly through Elizabeth's bequests that the Company was able to acquire the first part of its Barnet estate in 1602, later to become home to the Company's almshouses, by purchasing 66 acres of land in Barnet for £825 using money from the sale of her former property Shapcombe Manor as well as funds from the benefactor Robert Rogers. This led to the foundation of the Rogers and Grasvenor Trust, one of our Minor Trusts, which is used to fund educational grants and other charitable giving. Elizabeth directed that the income from the Barnet estate should be used for various charitable purposes including relief of poor prisoners, mending highways and giving small 'marriage portions' to help 'poor maidens' get married.

Ann Elliott was the widow of John Elliott, Master in 1583-1584, who died in 1599. She left a detailed will appointing the Leathersellers as her trustee to carry out various charitable works for her in perpetuity. She had a particular interest in education, for instance establishing a scholarship for a poor student to study at either Oxford or Cambridge University "for ever and relieng upon the integritie of the said company of Lethersellers" [sic]. The Leathersellers have continued to bestow student grants through this bequest and others,



now combined into The Leathersellers' Foundation, today supporting approximately 80 students on degree courses around the United Kingdom each year.

Charitable giving and education

Charitable giving, both from trusts or benefactions given to the Company to manage and from the Leathersellers' corporate account, has evolved over the centuries, but has always focused on helping those in society that are most marginalised. There has, therefore, always been a relationship between the Leathersellers and the recipients of its charity.

One of the most ancient and long-lasting forms of giving was the granting of regular allowances, or pensions, to members or their widows or other dependents suffering financial hardship. As a reflection of the position of women in society in previous centuries widows formed by far the largest group of those needing this kind of support.

Recipients outside of the Company have also long been supported, and again women and girls have been a significant focus of this philanthropy, both as beneficiaries of very specific, ancient gifts such as Elizabeth Grasvenor's bequest to provide small dowries to poor young maidens, and as the focus of female-orientated charities given grants in more recent times. In the late Victorian and Edwardian periods these charities reflected the attitudes, as well as needs, of contemporary society, for example the Irish Distressed Ladies Fund; the Countess of Dufferin's Fund for Supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India; the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants; and Miss Rye's Emigration Home for Destitute Little Girls. One of several female-focused charities currently being supported is Noa Girls, a charity providing practical, emotional and therapeutic support to adolescent girls in the Orthodox Jewish community.

Part of this charitable focus also extends to education. The Leathersellers have enabled students to attend university for over four centuries, and its student grants programme remains a central part of its charitable portfolio today. The first women to receive university scholarships from the Leathersellers did so at St Catherine's College, Oxford, from the 1974-1975 academic year onwards when the college began to admit female students. The first female student to receive a scholarship funded by the Leathersellers' ancient educational trusts, a former pupil of Prendergast School wishing to study an MA in Education at Lancaster University, did so in 1983.

The most historic way in which the Leathersellers currently support female education is their connection to Prendergast School, now part of the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools. The school was founded by a 19th century Headmaster of Colfe's School, Joseph Prendergast, who was concerned about the lack of education available for girls in Lewisham at the time. It opened its doors to girls aged between nine and sixteen "being of good character and sufficient health" in 1890, on a site provided by the Leathersellers' Company, and has flourished ever since. The Company has appointed Governors since 1951 and has supported the school financially in many different ways over the decades, enabling girls to fulfil their potential and pursue their chosen future paths in life.

From female members and apprentices to staff, women tenants, student grantees and almswomen to widow pensioners, Prendergast schoolgirls and the Master of the Company, women and girls have formed part of the Leathersellers' community in ever-evolving ways since its earliest times. While these roles are many and varied, the present and future constant is the recognition that to tell a history of the Leathersellers is also to tell a female story that continues to be written in the present day.

The Leathersellers' Foundation

Natalia Rymaszewska
Head of Grants

Charitable Giving 2022–2023

2022–2023 saw renewed difficulties for many individuals, families and the organisations working to support them as the cost-of-living dramatically increased across the UK. Once again charities rallied their staff, volunteers and supporters to continue their work in the face of this rising need, despite the diminished value and availability of funding, increased pressure and job insecurity.

With multi-year, core funding at its heart, the Leathersellers' Foundation continued to help charities supporting the most disadvantaged, to ensure that hope, respect and positive change for the future continued across a broad range of approaches, from counselling and crisis interventions to arts and outdoor activity-based means of addressing trauma. Evidence shows that there is no single magic bullet to transform the complex and often multi-dimensional challenges that children, young people and adults face; however, the power of individual connection, new opportunities and hope has been shown to go far. Internally, the Foundation and the wider Leathersellers team have continued to work to maintain and improve continually our own approach and processes.

The Charity Committee began the year with £1,031,000 pre-committed to existing grants to charity partners, and therefore focused its efforts on strengthening those relationships and identifying a new cohort of funding partners to expand the portfolio going forward.

ACE Strategy: Delivering our first year

In 2022–2023 the first year of the five-year Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) strategy came into play, following a single year pilot explored in the 2021–2022 Review. ACE is a research-informed area of work with a global body of evidence. Research demonstrates widely the lasting impact that traumatic experiences as children or young people have on the rest of their lives, not simply affecting their future behaviour or emotions, but with considerable negative effects on their mental and physical health and educational and career success. People who have experienced six or more ACEs have a life expectancy that is 20 years lower than that of the average population. Multiple ACEs prevent individuals from achieving their potential, in opposition to a core aim of our Foundation's work.

Once again demand for these grants far outstripped demand with 211 applications received in summer 2022 for consideration during the Livery year. Following in-depth assessments and visits involving both Committee members and the Grants team, 24 new multi-year grants were recommended and approved by the Foundation's Trustees. The successful charities were able to evidence both the effectiveness of their approach and how lived experience informed and improved their work, as well as the geographic or demographic need for their support. We look forward to supporting them for the next four years, linking them to relevant partners where possible and learning and sharing more about their inspirational work.

Looking Ahead

2022–2023 saw some personnel changes within the Grants team with Natalia Rymaszewska, Head of Grants, absent for seven months on maternity leave having welcomed her twin daughters. The team and funding programmes were ably led by Stacey Lamb in her absence. Working together for several months before and after this led the Leathersellers to contemplate the value of an additional senior resource in the Grants team.

From August 2023 the new role of Head of Charity Grants has been created, principally managing the work of the Charity Committee (as well as guiding the Small Grants Committee) and progressing the five-year ACE and responsive grant strategy as outlined above. The Head of Grants role continues to have oversight over the entirety of the Foundation's giving portfolio, leading on the strategy, governance, finance, people management and communications hand-in-hand with the wider Leathersellers' team, as well as the day-to-day management of the Education and Leather portfolios. Stacey Lamb has joined the team on a permanent basis as Head of Charity Grants (full-time) and Natalia Rymaszewska continues as Head of Grants (four days a week).

This additional resource allows the continued delivery of the ACE strategy and responsive grant programme, with greater opportunity to recognise and provide additional support to grantees. Over the last year this has continued with further learning and improvement opportunities, including increased utilisation of Leathersellers' resources such as subsidised or free provision of the Hall to partners, sharing knowledge, and continuing open and honest conversations with all parties.

Using the strong foundation of existing experience whilst being open to change and development, the first year of the 2022–2027 charitable giving strategy has already benefited from our greater understanding of the complexities of the problems involved, and allowed the Leathersellers' Company and its members to remain confident that our funds remain relevant and impactful in an ever-changing world.

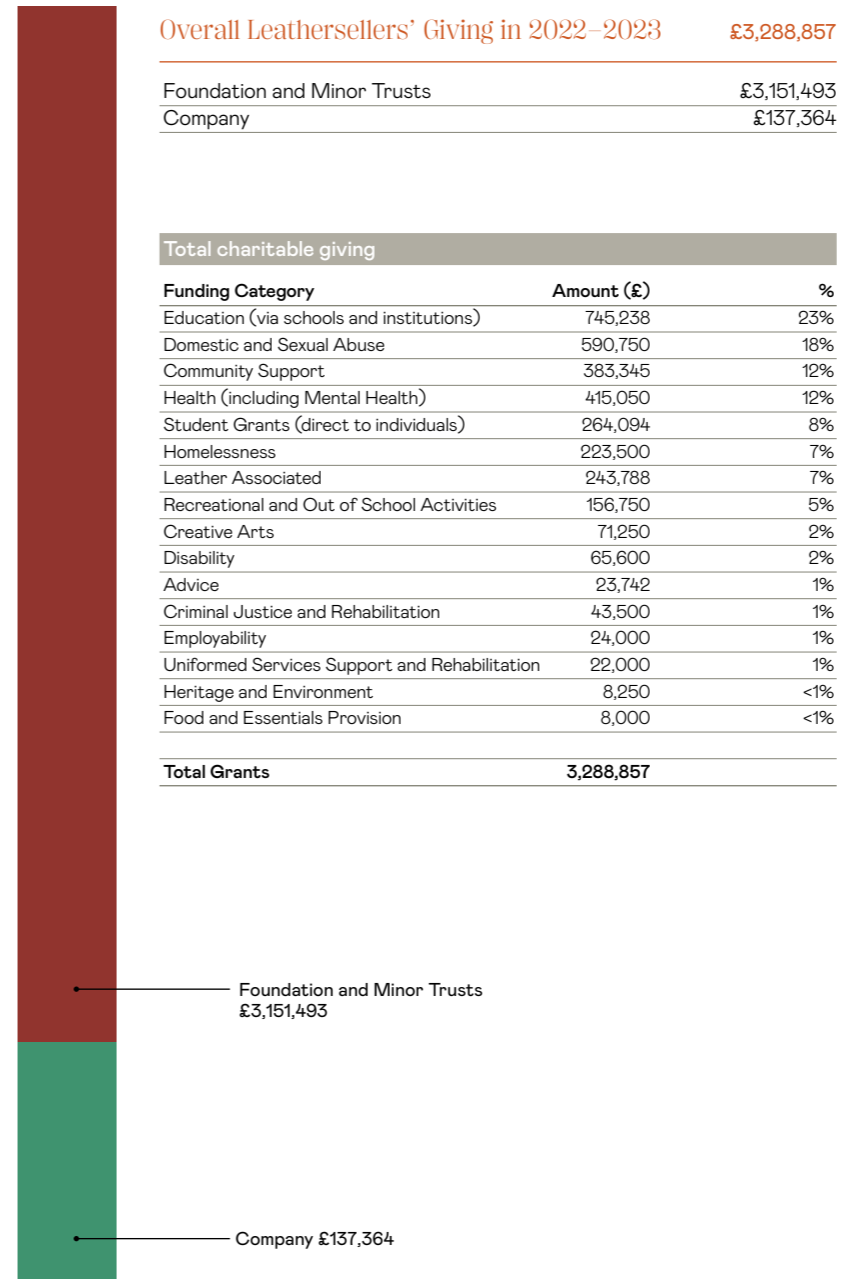
We look forward to keeping you up to date with developments on how we aim to support those most in need across the UK, and how our community of members can be involved.

Overall Leathersellers' Giving in 2022–2023 **£3,288,857**

Foundation and Minor Trusts	£3,151,493
Company	£137,364

Total charitable giving

Funding Category	Amount (£)	%
Education (via schools and institutions)	745,238	23%
Domestic and Sexual Abuse	590,750	18%
Community Support	383,345	12%
Health (including Mental Health)	415,050	12%
Student Grants (direct to individuals)	264,094	8%
Homelessness	223,500	7%
Leather Associated	243,788	7%
Recreational and Out of School Activities	156,750	5%
Creative Arts	71,250	2%
Disability	65,600	2%
Advice	23,742	1%
Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation	43,500	1%
Employability	24,000	1%
Uniformed Services Support and Rehabilitation	22,000	1%
Heritage and Environment	8,250	<1%
Food and Essentials Provision	8,000	<1%
Total Grants	3,288,857	



Responsive Grants Programme

Stacey Lamb

Head of Charity Grants

The cost-of-living crisis

As the cost-of-living crisis forced an estimated 6.6m UK households into fuel poverty, charities fought to keep their doors open, balancing rising costs with increasing demand for their services. With one foodbank reporting a 700% increase in energy costs, we asked our grantees what they needed and how we could help.

“This increased demand for our services,” says Regenerate, a grantee, “compounded with unprecedented levels of inflation and rising energy costs, has placed our organisation under increased pressure to maintain our existing levels of provision.”

The challenge to retain staff

With rising overheads causing many charities to streamline their services, a key concern of our grantees was losing experienced, long-standing staff. 80% of grantees surveyed were aware that with job security unclear, their staff members were struggling to pay bills and that the well-being of both staff and volunteers was being negatively impacted by the crisis.

As an anonymous grantee puts it: “Our staff team are struggling financially and we’re looking at salary increases to help, but this in turn places greater financial strain on us organisationally...I know one of my staff is having to rely on food bank support and she’s already working two jobs.”

Meeting increased demand

Charities supported through our Main Grants Programme, which focuses on tackling adverse childhood experiences, noted the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on the young people they support.

Regenerate describes the impact: “The past few months have seen an increase in young people wanting to access our youth club because they know it’s a space where they can keep warm, enjoy hot meals and engage in free workshops/activities. Some have mentioned the struggles their families have had to endure, from relying on food banks and keeping heating turned off to parents working longer hours to make ends meet.”

Adapting to changing needs

As the cost-of-living crisis puts greater pressure on young people to find ways to make money, charities are having to adapt their approach to provide new and earlier interventions.

“The team are now adapting and developing service provision to incorporate poverty-informed practice,” says grantee Art Against Knives. “This recognises the major impact of the cost-of-living crisis on young people, who are already financially vulnerable. As well as ongoing exposure to trafficking and criminal exploitation, young people are looking for new avenues to earn money many of whom feel a responsibility to support family members affected by economic decline. In particular, girls and young women are engaging with social media sites that encourage pornographic content in exchange for subscribers and income. These activities are becoming increasingly common and normalised within peer groups.”

Our response

Informed by evidence provided by our grantees, the Leathersellers' Foundation launched a Responsive Grants Programme in October 2022, supporting ten of our current grantees with an additional grant of £15,000 each to help address increasing financial strains and growing levels of demand.

“We were delighted to receive the cost-of-living grant from the Leathersellers. It helped us understand better the extent of the rise in the cost of living both organisationally and for all our people. It was a thoughtful thing to do, and the moral backing that comes with such support reminds us that we are not alone and that other people care about the things we care about too.”

– **abandofbrothers (grantee)**

In line with our IVAR Flexible Funder commitments, we provided funds on an unrestricted basis, empowering charities to use the funds where they knew they would make the most difference for those they support and to improve the sustainability of their teams and organisations.

Supporting staff by increasing salaries

Most charities receiving a grant used all or part of the funding to provide a much-needed salary uplift to staff.

As grantee Art Against Knives attests: “The core grant from the Leathersellers has been an absolutely essential uplift for Art Against Knives this year. We are deeply grateful, because it remains an incredibly difficult time owing to rising core costs and the need to respond organisationally to the cost-of-living crisis. This grant enabled us to feel confident

that we could offer a permanent cost of living 5% salary uplift to all staff (except the CEO) in January 2023. We are not sure we could have done it without this grant.”

Maintaining crucial services

In addition to supporting staff retention, the funding also helped grantees to maintain service levels and adapt approaches to meet evolving needs.

“The [Shoreditch] Trust hosts a weekly, pay-what-you-can lunch club for City and Hackney residents, as a vehicle to support people experiencing food poverty and social isolation. Running costs for the lunch club have increased significantly this year as a result of increased ingredient and energy costs. The grant from the Leathersellers' Foundation enabled us to continue this provision, maintaining a model where people aren't excluded owing to personal financial constraints.”

– **Shoreditch Trust (grantee)**

Our ongoing commitment

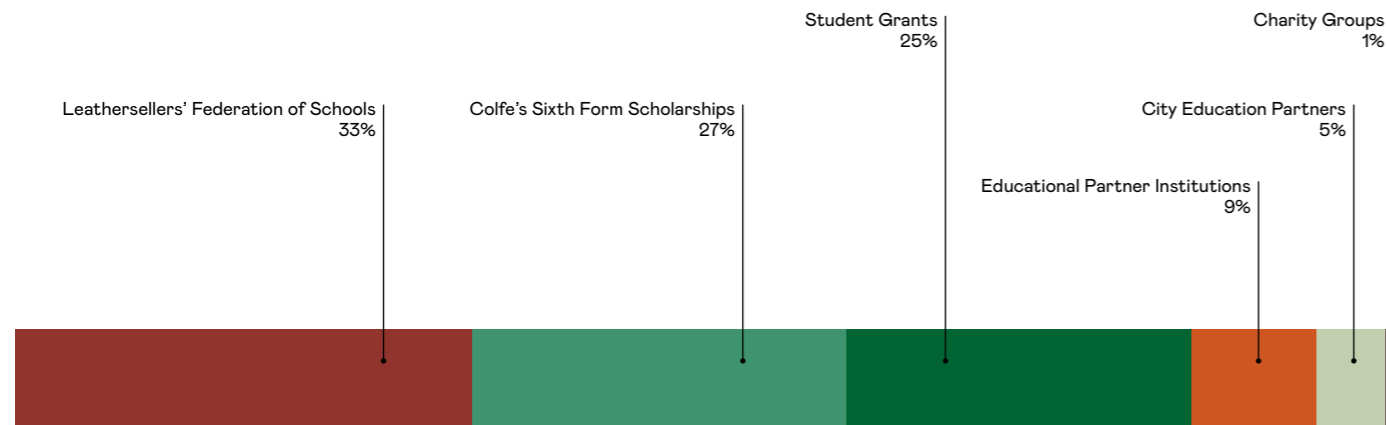
When we take the decision to support charities with multi-year grants, we make a commitment to support their sustainability and success for that period and beyond. Thanks to the independence of the Leathersellers' Foundation we were able to respond to the needs of our grantees with urgency and provide additional support where it was needed most.

Indeed, as grantee Youth Adventure Trust says: “Thank you so much to the Foundation for introducing the [Responsive Grants Programme]; it will be a lifeline for so many charities.”

Education 2022–2023

Exploring new approaches to further social mobility alongside valued partners was central to the Leathersellers' charitable contribution in the field of Education for 2022–2023. Education-focused grant funding again reached over £900,000 with a mixture of long-standing strategic programme support and responsive interventions.

The diagram below shows the highlights of this complex and evolving area of our work.



Split of Educational Giving 2022–2023

“Social mobility is the idea that every child or young person facing disadvantage is supported to realise their full potential, whatever pathways they choose to pursue.”

The Leathersellers' definition of social mobility.

Social Mobility Review – Development of impact measurement framework

Building on the previous landscape review and portfolio review, this year the Leathersellers continued to work with specialists Better Purpose to increase understanding of the difference made by our funding. Through well-attended online workshops we gained insight both from members of the Livery and from grantee representatives, which underpinned the co-development of a problem tree and a theory of change on which to base our continued progress. Whilst this might sound theoretical it has an eminently practical purpose, informing the creation of a clear framework of outcomes that will signify success for future funding. This work continues into 2023–2024 as we seek to build the tools, systems and processes to ensure that we gather this data in a way that is least burdensome for our partners, but that will allow us to report on the impact of our funds to a much greater extent going forward. The information gathered will be used continually to inform and improve what we do and how we do it, to enable us to support our partners as effectively as we can.

Leathersellers' Federation of Schools (LFS)

In response to local educational needs and those identified by the schools' leadership, 2022–2023 saw the LFS Governing Board's bold step of consulting on turning the Federation into a local Multi-Academy Trust. Their purposes in doing so were clear: to ensure sustainable governance for the schools; to strengthen education provision by growing the size of the primary phase in coming years to allow for greater collaboration; and to provide greater financial autonomy. As the currently agreed proposal stands, the proposed change would involve the Leathersellers' governance support evolving from providing school governors to having a role as the Corporate Member of the Trust, and being able to nominate a number of Trustees.

While there has been regrettable disruption to the work of the schools over the last term, the executive team and Governing Board demonstrated exceptional professionalism, clarity of focus and purpose in their mission to ensure the best educational outcomes for the children and young people of Lewisham and the surrounding areas. We continue to work closely with them on a range of projects, some of which are explained further below. A highlight of our collaboration was celebrating the completion of the first year of the Leathersellers' Scholarship Programme by welcoming Year 8 students to the Hall in July, when Leathersellers' members and LFS staff joined together to congratulate the students and their families. The transformation in confidence, aspiration and positivity made by these inspiring young people was palpable; as the Master aptly summarised: "Not a dry eye in the house!"

Colfe's School

Our partnership with Colfe's School continues to thrive, with the exceptional Leathersellers' Sixth Form Scholarship programme at the heart of a new drive by Colfe's alumni and development team to raise further funds from individuals and corporates in order to support more scholars into the future. The Leathersellers once again generously committed to the scheme, with a further five-year grant from 2023–2028 ensuring that the seventeen Sixth Form Scholarship recipients in 2022–2023 will be able to complete their studies and that a further four cohorts have funds secured for two years of study. The number of scholars will decrease gradually over this time as the school aims to expand its fundraising. With a number of pupils further supported via the Student Grants scheme at university, and all invited to join the Leathersellers' Alumni Network with a number actively involved already, former Colfe's scholars look to be central to the Leatherseller community for generations to come.

Our students

Our flagship Student Grants programme continued into 2022–2023, supporting 79 undergraduate students studying a range of courses at 42 different universities across the United Kingdom. From school leavers to mature students, those who have yearned for a particular career from an early age to those transferring skills from another path to a new passion, each and every individual brings their unique mix of ambition, determination and tenacity in overcoming a range of challenges to reach where they are now. At a time of rising costs and increasing pressure on individual finances, these grants offer opportunity and accessibility to this exceptional group.

The annual round of recruitment for new students for 2023–2024 looked a little different this year, with the Education Committee choosing to focus priority for new funding on care experienced students as well as current/former LFS students and Colfe's School scholars. Whilst this had the intended effect of improving the efficiency and manageability of the process, demand still outstripped supply with 81 eligible applications submitted, providing a much improved 1 in 3 chance of success. These undergraduate students, whose personal circumstances may otherwise curtail their ambitions to study at university and desire to contribute to society globally, applied from across the country.

With this more targeted approach came a greater knowledge of the particular challenges faced, supported by external expertise and lived experience from barrister and City Councillor Ruby Sayed. Exceptional candidates were again identified, and a review of what can be learned from the trialled new approach is underway. This understanding will enable the Committee to decide on continuation or variation of this focus for next year's new applicants.

Career/Skills mentoring pilot

The career and skills focused mentoring programme pilot ran throughout 2022–2023 with training having been offered for both parties in advance. Our cohort of around 30 mentors comprised of members of the Livery and student grants alumni, who were paired with current students in receipt of grants. The experience of one of these pairs features in this *Review* and we look forward to hearing about others, learning from their experiences, and improving the programme for a wider roll-out in 2023–2024.

Further education partners

2022–2023 saw the final year of a number of long-standing grants such as the support towards the impressive contributions in the field of science of eight post-graduate students at St Catherine's College, Oxford, and Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, as well as a Mathematics Fellow at each college. New work will be funded by the Foundation going forward, strongly aligned with our focus on social mobility for the years ahead, and we look forward to sharing the learning and impact of this shift in the next *Review*.

Children and young people's mental health training for nurses

Allowing for exploration of the need and how best to address this, a further single-year grant was also made this year to the Royal College of Nursing Foundation to enable nurses working in a range of specialisms to have access to additional mental health training that will help them to support struggling children and young people until they can access specialist services. Provision for this varies widely by NHS Trust, so working together with the RCN we hope to put the spotlight on this development opportunity, at times offering the grants as match or partial funding to spread the impact as widely as possible.

City education partners

With continued economic forces impacting many, City University requested a further three years of support towards the costs of providing emergency accommodation to students, after the pilot study last year showed that the Leatherseller-funded rooms were in almost continual use by students for periods of days or weeks owing to unsafe situations such as domestic violence, unfit housing or falling victim to tenancy scams.

Five exceptional students were again supported through our Guildhall School of Music and Drama scholarships, ensuring that their lack of available finances does not impede their opportunities to develop their immense talents. We were also pleased to support again a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral and to provide opportunities for finance and business leaders of the future via the Mansion House Scholarship programme, both as part of City-wide initiatives involving other livery companies.

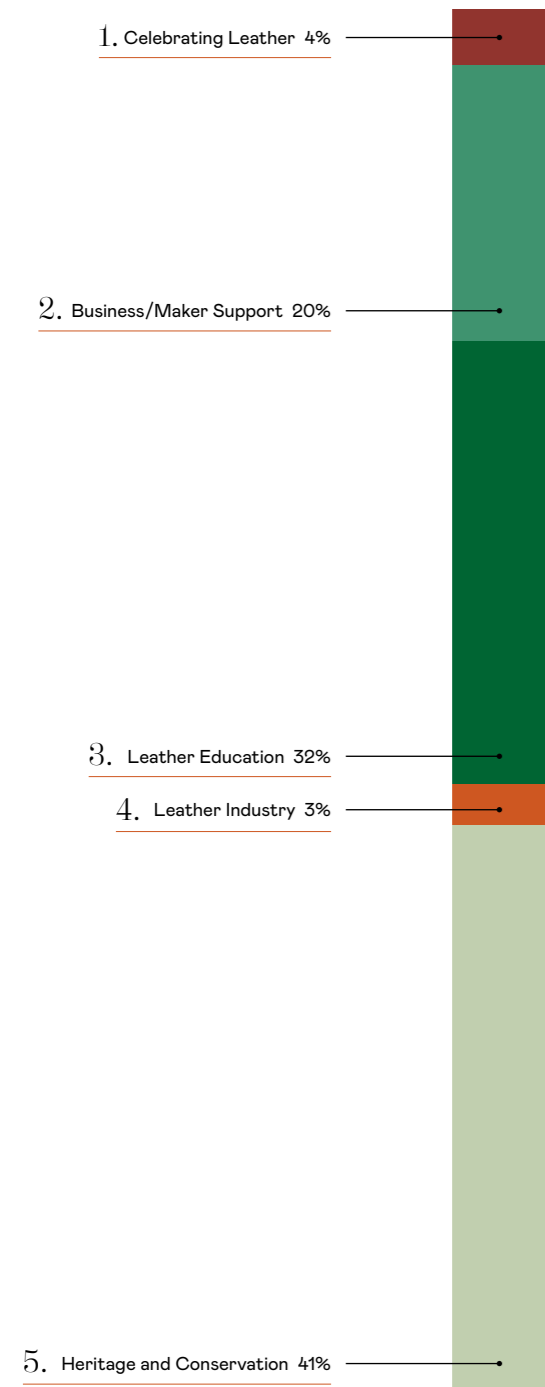
Leathersellers' Alumni

Leathersellers' alumni are individuals who were, at some stage in their studies, supported through the Leathersellers' Foundation. We are actively reconnecting and maintaining these relationships to help measure the future impact of our programmes and to expand our network to foster connections and opportunity.

The Leathersellers' Alumni Network now has **440 active members** with whom we are in direct contact. We are looking to grow, reaching out to individuals supported directly, and through our partner institutions in the last few decades.

212 of those alumni, and counting, are part of the Alumni Group on LinkedIn.

Leather 2022–2023



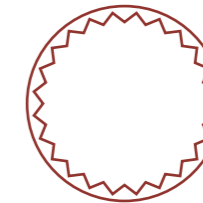
2022–2023 saw the further evolution of the Leather Trade Committee’s work in developing partnerships and projects based around the five pillars outlined below.

Five pillars

- 1 Celebrating Leather
- 2 Business/Maker Support
- 3 Leather Education
- 4 Leather Industry
- 5 Heritage and Conservation

The grants listed encompass both charitable giving from the Leathersellers’ Foundation and related Minor Trusts as well as that from the Leathersellers’ Company, and key to this were wider efforts to utilise the strength of the Leathersellers’ community for our partners’ benefit. A review of how this support has worked, and where our focus and priorities should be for the future, will take place in 2023–2024 with development of a five-year Leather Strategy underway.

Total Leather Giving	£316,696
Foundation and Minor Trusts	£236,696
Company	£80,000



1 – Celebrating Leather

The Leathersellers champion the sustainable and ethical nature of leather with a focus on increasing student knowledge and access to the material. This is to ensure that designers, scientists and buyers of the future are aware of the ecological credentials and versatility of leather.

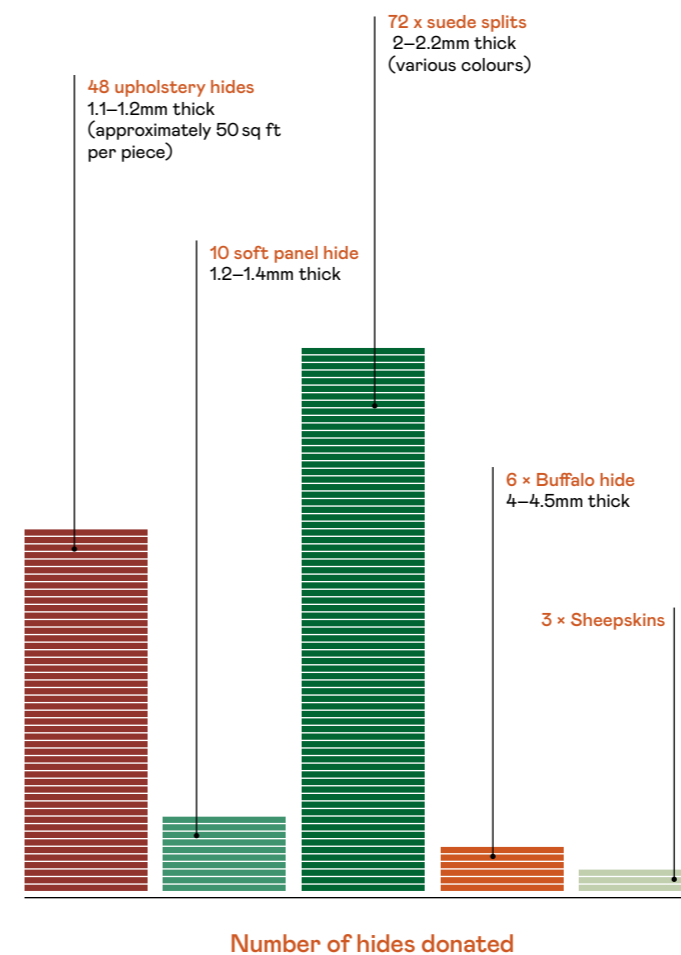
2022–2023 saw our Surplus Leather Project come into effect, with thanks to our wholesale partner, Abbey England, who managed the donations and distribution of the leather, the tanneries who donated the skins, and our university partners who stored these and taught their students how to use them. Each of the donated hides was surplus to customer requirements and would otherwise have been stored indeterminately or ended up in landfill. Our university partners had free rein regarding how best to engage their students with the material and approached it in a range of ways, from holding special workshops or masterclasses to integrating it as part of specific projects or classes. A small grant from the Leather Portfolio allowed this undertaking, and we intend to review how potentially to increase the scope of the project in 2023–2024.

Tanneries involved:

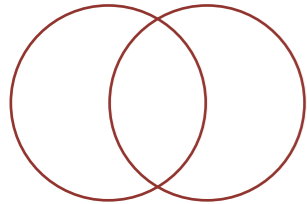
Scottish Leather, Pittards, Steads, Skyeskins

University partners:

Central Saint Martins / UAL, De Montfort University, London College of Fashion / UAL, Royal College of Art, University of Northampton, University of South Wales

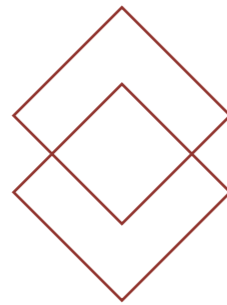


Leather 2022–2023 continued



2 – Business/Maker Support

The Leathersellers' cohort of makers continues to grow, with individuals and small businesses who utilise leather supported to ensure that leatherworking skills are maintained and taught across the United Kingdom. With a sizeable grant going towards the Leathersellers' Awards at Cockpit Arts, we were pleased to see the large-scale redevelopment of their Deptford base and also to contribute additional funds to the refurbishment of its Leather Hub (equipment all their makers can access). The new Leatherworking apprenticeships are now underway, with skills being shared ranging from saddlery and bridle making to bootmaking, accessories and interior design. Furthermore, two of the newly identified Leather student grants have been awarded to individuals who, having previously had successful design careers in the fashion industry, are now returning to the origins of their work and setting up as independent makers. We hope that additional support for them to gain knowledge, practical leatherworking skills and connections will set them on a course to success. Beyond funding, this element of our Leather Portfolio is particularly engaged with the Leathersellers' Alumni Network, which we look forward to developing further in the year ahead.



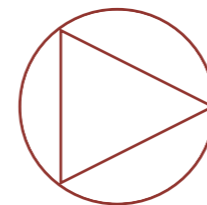
3 – Leather Education

Central to our efforts in Leather is education, both in leatherworking skills and in the science behind leather technology. We continue to build a diverse portfolio of directly- and indirectly-funded students supported by the Leathersellers at university and can already see the benefits of further developing this network coming to the fore.

Alumni such as Alice Robinson, Yusuf Osman and Charlie Laurie are actively contributing to a number of Leatherseller activities both directly and via partners. Our long-standing partnerships endure with the University of Northampton, the London College of Fashion, De Montfort University and the Royal College of Art, although the approaches taken to these partnerships continue to evolve.

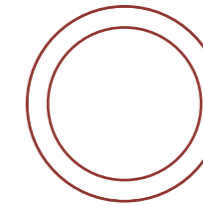
2022–2023 saw the giving of an additional grant to support an interesting new initiative: De Montfort University's "Artifacts Live: A Legacy in Leather" project. This enabled students to be inspired by historic items loaned by the Museum of Leathercraft and industry visits, be taught hand skills in masterclasses and then combine these experiences to create new work.

Looking at an earlier stage of an individual's journey, over the coming years we are supporting the Creative Dimensions Trust to incorporate leather working skills into some of their inspirational workshops in schools, designed to encourage the ambitions of young people with particular talents in creating and making. Alongside a grant we have been pleased to host them at Leathersellers' Hall, both for supporter events and workshops.



4 – Leather Industry

Recognising the difficulty faced in recruiting new talent for tanneries, the Leathersellers offered grants to those looking to offer apprenticeships for the first time. Not mired in bureaucracy as is often the complaint with government-sponsored schemes, two micro-tanneries in the UK achieved this over the last year – though not without challenges. We look forward to learning from the initial reports on impact and learning achieved, in order to see how we can improve available opportunities.



5 – Heritage and Conservation

Heritage and conservation has been a particular area of development in the last twelve months while our core partners look to ensure their legacy for the future. The Leather Conservation Centre has been searching for a new location to enable it to continue to build a sustainable practice of working with museums, collections and private individuals worldwide whilst ensuring that conservation skills (and leather items) are maintained well into the future. Having explored options extensively, it now looks likely that the Centre will relocate to Leicester, with excellent opportunities identified. The order book is strong and research projects, including assessment of the collection and training of staff at Auschwitz, have amplified its reputation in recent times.

The Museum of Leathercraft has identified a significant opportunity to ensure that the collection is maintained and collaboratively exhibited well into the future. This opportunity would see ownership of the collection pass to Northampton Museum and Art Gallery. With this prestigious site – only minutes from the current location of the Museum of Leathercraft – having undergone significant redevelopment in recent years, and with the museum and art gallery's focus on Northamptonshire history and shoe heritage, they are a perfect partner to secure the collection for the future. The trustees are carefully managing the process, and a number of them will continue to support the collection through a Friends of the Leathercraft Collection committee. The Leathersellers have supported both the Museum of Leathercraft and the Leather Conservation Centre extensively in recent years, and are continuing to assist with funds and connections to enable these next steps to be undertaken.

Personal Giving

The Liverymen and Freemen of the Leathersellers' Company, as well as staff members, again gave generously in the Livery Year of 2022-23, unlocking additional charitable giving from the Leathersellers' Company through the match funding initiative. Overall, a total of £42,500 was raised and matched, resulting in grants of £8,500 to five frontline charities working across the UK.

Bright Futures UK is the only UK charity supporting children and young people back into education after long-term illness. They provide tutoring, mentoring, and buddy programmes, with 85% of referrals based in London due to the concentration of children's hospitals. Services moved online during the pandemic enabling the charity to reach many more beneficiaries nationally.

Leeds Baby Bank was founded in 2017 with the mission of helping children who are living in poverty get the best start in life. Over the last five years the charity has grown at a fast rate and now receive referrals for over 150 families a month from healthcare professionals and midwives, distributing essential items for mums and babies across Leeds East.

The Homeless Support Project was founded in 2016 to give support, food, and shelter to people who are homeless, rough sleeping, sofa surfing, destitute, lonely, suffering addictions, and experiencing mental health issues or food poverty. They also run a food bank service and food parcels. Much of the food is donated by supermarkets and several of the volunteers are ex-service users.

The POD is a charity that provides after-school care for disabled children and offers respite for young carers who have disabled siblings, deal with frightening situations, or care for sick parents. Many referrals come from professionals such as GPs, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), and social work teams. Family members benefit from respite and form a strong network of support.

Hope and Vision Communities was founded in 2020 by an ex-offender and his sentencing judge, with the aim of breaking the cycle of addiction and re-offending. They work with men who are leaving drug/alcohol rehabilitation, providing them with somewhere safe to live and a supportive community. Assistance includes self-help groups, peer support, key worker meetings, and a community allotment. The charity works with other local charities, food banks, and churches, and creates volunteer opportunities for the men to re-engage with their community.

Every donation makes a considerable difference, so whether you can support with a regular amount monthly, quarterly, or annually, or want to donate as a one-off, we are here to help. Contact our grants team on charityapp@leathersellers.co.uk to find out more.

Grants awarded by geographical reach (small grants)



Small Grants

The provision of small grants recognises the crucial services small charities provide to local communities throughout the UK. This year we allocated just over £200,000 to support a broad range of activities delivered by small charities, working to enable individuals and communities. A total of 64 one-off grants were awarded to small charities and Charitable Incorporated Organisations.

This year the single award amount was increased from £3,000 to £5,000 based on feedback and understanding that this increase would make a more significant difference to small charities. It was accepted that this would result in fewer but more meaningful grants.

Providing wide-ranging support to small charities across the UK

Areas supported by charity type	%
Health (including mental health)	13
Community support	12
Disability	9
Domestic and sexual abuse	6
Education	5
Advice	5
Recreational and out-of-school activities	4
Employability	3
Criminal justice and rehabilitation	3
Other	3
Creative arts	2

Colfe's School

Matthew Pellereau
Chair of Governors

I am very happy to report that it has been another successful year at Colfe's.

In the first year of real examinations since the start of the pandemic, Colfe's pupils excelled at both GCSE and A-level with historically high proportions of top grades: 39.5% of A-levels were graded at A*, rising to 71.7% at A*/A, and 37.5% of GCSE grades were graded 9, with 84% attaining 9/8/7. This is a significant achievement given that none of these grades were based on internal school assessment, which was the basis on which all grades were awarded in 2020 and 2021.

98% of leavers went on to attend their chosen university including Russell Group, other leading competitive universities and Oxbridge. Course choices remain as diverse as ever; as well as traditional options such as English, Mathematics, History and Medicine, Colfe's students chose to study a range of subjects including Liberal Arts, Nuclear Science and Materials, Game Design and Production

and Sports Journalism. Many congratulations to staff and pupils for this record-breaking achievement.

The library at Colfe's is the hub of the school and I am delighted to see how many of the pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. A team of avid readers from Years 7, 8 and 9 triumphed at the Grand Final of the National Reading Champions Quiz, run by the Literacy Trust, winning the competition for the second year running with a final score that was four points clear at the top of the table.

Co-curricular achievement across the year was equally successful. Senior school productions included Stoppard's "The Real Inspector Hound" and "Bugsy Malone". A glorious return to St Alfege's Church in Greenwich for the winter concert, and a series of performances from our collaboration with Trinity Laban Conservatoire, were just a few of the highlights from the year in Music.

Team sports saw success in hockey, water polo, cricket, and football with the U15 and first XI boys' teams both

doing well in national tournaments and U15 batter Emily scoring the first half century in girls' cricket for the school. Individual sporting achievements included Alex (Year 8) placing top in the U14 LTS National Doubles competition, Year 8 fencer Thea placing fifth in the British Championships and in water polo Lily (Year 10) and Issy (Year 9) were selected to represent London at the National Games.

This year's art exhibition was a fantastic display of talent and creativity; the subject continues to be a particular strength at the school with more pupils than ever choosing Art and Photography A-levels.

This is the second year our Ukrainian pupils have been with us, and they continue to add to the rich cultural diversity of the school. In December, Year 6 pupils in the junior school were taught the famous Christmas carol "Shchedryk, Shchedryk" by their Ukrainian peers. The performance was profiled by both ITV London News and the BBC UkraineCast. In the spring a special 'Eurovision' event was hosted by one of our Ukrainian pupils (with special guest appearance from Graham Norton himself!), and all money raised went to the Red Cross Ukraine appeal.

Our Founder would be delighted that Colfe's continues to go from strength to strength. High numbers of applications will see the pupil roll at a record level this coming September. My fellow Governors join me in congratulating the pupils and staff for their hard work and dedication in achieving so much this academic year.



Colfe's Concert at St Alfege's Church, Greenwich

Leathersellers' Federation of Schools

Andy Rothery
Chair of Governors

It has been an eventful year at the Federation.

In the spring the Governing Board made the decision to convert the Federation to a local Multi-Academy Trust to ensure the long-term sustainability of governance; help raise standards of education for more young people in Lewisham; and have more control over our finances. There was expected resistance from unions and pockets of the local community against the decision, which led to industrial action that was ultimately resolved following a series of meetings with ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service). Ultimately the unions agreed to accept that the Federation will change to a MAT on 1 January 2024 and that they would take no further industrial action on the matter.

The impact this action has had on students' exam results is yet to be seen, but sadly it is likely to have had an adverse effect. Now that the industrial action is settled, we look forward to the whole Federation community coming together and re-focusing on our core purpose when everyone returns to school after the summer break.

Many fantastic things have also happened in our schools this past year.

We welcomed Mr Ed Coogan as the new headteacher at Prendergast Vale, and Company member Ralph-Lewis Ackah, a recent Prendergast Vale and Prendergast Sixth Form student, to our Governing Board. All, including Helen Marasha, a Leathersellers' Company member who joined the Governing Board at the end of the previous academic year, have made an excellent start to their respective roles in the Federation.

We also saw the launch of two

important new Leathersellers-funded initiatives in our schools.

The first is a scholarship project that supports 12 disadvantaged Year 8 students who are academically capable but at risk of becoming disengaged from school. Scholars are provided with a dedicated mentor who works with the students and their families to ensure that they maximise their potential, together with the resources that allow them to have all the equipment they need and to participate in all lessons, school trips, visits, and extra-curricular activities. A recent event at the Hall to celebrate the first year of the scholarship programme heard scholars' own words about the impact the scholarship has had on them this year. It was a moving experience and there was not a dry eye in the house.

The second is the generous funding of a free breakfast for all students across the Federation. Not only has this helped families struggling with the cost-of-living crisis but it also has improved students' punctuality and engagement in learning, because it gives them time at the start of the day to settle, eat and be better prepared for lessons.

We are grateful for the many other programmes the Leathersellers continue to support and the increasingly close relationship between the schools and the Company. Over the year, many



Clare Lennon (Master 2022–2023) with current Leathersellers' Scholars at a special congratulatory event with teachers and parents, marking completion of the programme's first year

students, parents, and staff visited the Hall and were able to find out more about the great work the Company does in education and more widely.

For the benefit of students and staff the Leathersellers also provided links to its network of educational partners such as St Catherine's College, Oxford; Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge; De Montfort University; and Cockpit Arts to name a few. It also provided leather trade links that saw the design and technology department receive some leather hides to work with. Students have been able to encounter many major employers and significant cultural institutions with trips and visits to Parliament, the Stock Exchange, the BBC, V&A, National Gallery and the Globe among many others, as well as trips further afield to Iceland, Canada, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, and the Scottish Highlands.

I would like to thank my fellow Governors, and all Leathersellers, for the extraordinary levels of support they have provided over this remarkable year, and to Paula Ledger, our Executive Head, and her leadership team for their vision and resilience. I am looking forward to returning in September to continue the outstanding work everyone is doing to provide an excellent education to the over 3,000 students across our Federation.

Leathersellers' Close

Lynne Smith
Grants Manager



Another year has gone by quickly, and the Close has seen its fair share of changes. New residents have joined as others have moved on. Sadly, we lost one of our oldest residents, Ken Edwards, who is much missed. We are pleased to welcome new residents Jenny and Alan Martin and Laura Agustin; we trust that they are settling well into their new community and surroundings.

September 2022 saw our residents attend the Hall once more for their annual outing, hosted by our first female Master, Clare Lennon, and her consort Peter. After a warm welcome, Archivist Kate Higgins gave a talk on the history of the almshouses and their connections to the Leathersellers over the centuries, illustrated with original records and artefacts from the archives and collections. The theme for this year's lunch was 'A Night at the Movies', with entertainment provided by the Sing 17 Choir. The Leathersellers' team did an incredible job transforming the Hall, creating a wonderful menu and bringing to life a sense of the red carpet for the residents.

The regular annual Macmillan Coffee Morning was once again organised by resident Alan Malin, and the amount raised was match funded by the Company. Thanks must go to the residents for their consistent and generous support.

This year was the comeback year for the Christmas carol service, which had fallen victim to Covid-19 restrictions the previous two years. The congregation, led by the Master, sang along heartily to the seasonal carols, and enjoyed the performance of two pieces sung by the choir of Christ Church Primary School.

Of course, May 2023 saw the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla, another unique event and a poignant moment for those of us who have only ever known one Sovereign, the late Queen Elizabeth II. As always, the residents' support for the Royal Family was evident, marking the occasion in style with an afternoon tea and a coronation themed quiz.

Our thanks go to Harrison Housing for the maintenance and repairs to the estate, in particular the gardens that look especially well-nurtured this year.

Leadership Awards

The Leathersellers' Award for Outstanding Leadership

The Leathersellers have three key military affiliations across the Armed Forces: 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, British Army; HMS Audacious, Royal Navy; and 230 Squadron, RAF. Each year the Company seeks to support these through the Leathersellers' Award for Outstanding Leadership, which recognises excellent examples of young leadership.



HMS Audacious

Citation report by Commander J Howard

Lead Engineering Technician W Jamieson

Since joining HMS Audacious in 2021 LET Jamieson has served through two demanding deployments and has now started his second busy maintenance period. During this time he has proved to be a hardworking and technically capable technician. He has often come up with creative solutions to novel problems and is known for always persevering with good humour in the face of adversity.

The demands of a record-breaking deployment often resulted in LET Jamieson having to work long hours in difficult conditions to ensure that defects got rectified. This directly supported the submarine getting back to sea to meet its operational commitments and deliver on vital defence tasking. His leadership skills have developed significantly during his time onboard, as he progressed to Assistant Head of the Propulsion Section. LET Jamieson's propulsion section is responsible for the full propulsion chain from the main engines through to the propulsor.

As a junior leader, he has led on multiple major overhauls of mission critical equipment allowing the boat to remain at sea. His dependable leadership, drive and character has earned the respect and trust of his colleagues, making him a worthy nominee for the annual Leathersellers' Award.



1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards

Citation report by Captain Edward Cooper

Corporal Ethan Jones

Corporal Ethan Jones has quickly established himself as one of the Regiment's most impressive Corporals. He is a leader amongst his peers, a most capable soldier, and a mature and reliable member of C Squadron, 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG).

He is consistently seen as the go-to soldier for any high-risk task. Since returning from Operations in Mali he has been promoted to Corporal and attended the Light Cavalry Crew Commander's Course, where he earned Top Student. At Regimental Duty he has excelled – acting as a Troop Sergeant, assisting with the planning and delivery of exercises to the standard expected of a Commissioned Officer, and managing a fleet of vehicles.

Cpl Jones drives forward activity. Helping to plan the international rugby 7s tournament in Mali, he also took part in regimental Nordic Skiing and organised a regimental rugby tour to the Bournemouth 7s tournament. It was a great success with the QDG team reaching the semi-finals of the non-professional cup. He also volunteers regularly for tasks such as assisting the regimental recruiting team. Most recently he organised to take a Jackal for a drive-past on Morgan's Army Charity ride, for a child with a terminal illness.

During this year his performance and attitude has never dipped. Cpl Jones is very capable leader who is a credit to the Regiment and thoroughly deserving of the coveted Leathersellers' Award for Outstanding Leadership.

"It is a great honour to be awarded this. I'm proud given how capable I know many of the other Corporals at QDG are. I would like to thank all those that I've worked with over the year and the Leathersellers for their generosity!"



230 Squadron RAF

Citation report by Squadron Leader Luke Foreman

Air Specialist (Class 1) Technician (AS1(T)) Jack Thomas

Arriving in Brunei having been newly posted to 230 Squadron, AS1(T) Thomas immediately made a positive impact on all those around him. With his infectious personality and constant enthusiasm, he consistently improves morale and team ethos for those that surround him. Although he is not explicitly in a leadership role, he sets an example for his superiors and peers alike through his professional drive and joviality.

In addition to his substantial engineering workload, Thomas volunteers to lead the running of the Squadron Welfare Facility. Organising frequent social events for service personnel and families alike, he is at the centre of all that is delivered in the Tigers' Lair. Given that he is only 21 years old, his influence and bearing are remarkable; where he goes, others follow. Thomas is a pleasure to have on the Squadron and displays all the qualities we could desire. His hard work and positive mindset inspire us all daily.

"It is a privilege to be on 230 Squadron in Brunei and to be nominated for this award. It has given me some amazing opportunities and I cannot wait for what the future holds."



Left: Corporal Ethan Jones
Right: Jack Thomas 230 Sqn RAF

Property

Nick Dart
Head of Property

3 St Helen's Place

Practical Completion of the redevelopment of Number 3 was delivered by the main contractor, Collins, on 8th March 2023. Whilst completion was delayed, Collins did a fine job of producing a high-quality and sustainable office product and it was completed under budget.

It is worth reminding ourselves why the Company decided to redevelop this site. The reason was that by the time the occupational leases expired in June 2020, the building was at the end of its life cycle. It was tired and required growing amounts of irrecoverable expenditure each year in order to stay operational.

It was decided, therefore, to carry out a complete redevelopment of the site with the Company alone taking on the construction and letting risk. Planning consent for the new building was granted in October 2019. Construction started with a strip-out while the country was in lockdown in August 2020, followed in November by the main works contract involving three phases: major demolition, rebuilding and fit-out.

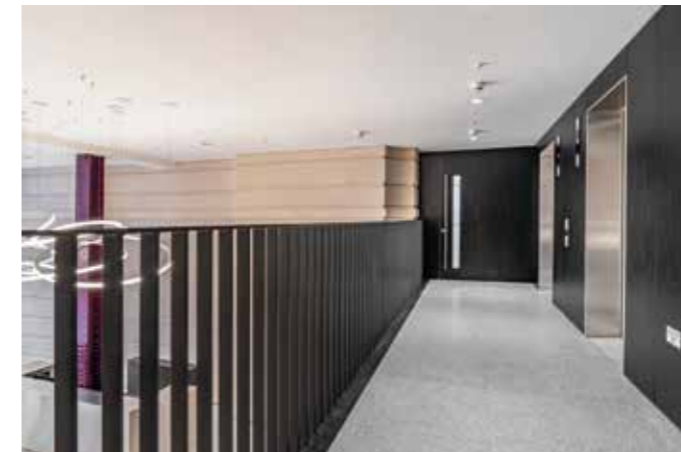
The building design recognises the need to be future-proof. For example, to meet the increasingly important end-of-commute demands of occupiers, 75 cycle bays are provided in the basement with changing rooms, showers and lockers. Furthermore, in order to meet sustainability targets the building is powered by electricity only (rather than gas) with a 100% green supplier contract; all lighting is LED; and there are a sedam roof and solar panels. A BREEAM rating of Excellent has been achieved and an EPC rating of A.

The potential of the site was maximised by increasing the lettable floor area by 50% from 20,000 to 30,000 square feet and by providing a high-quality offering which will maximise the building's appeal and therefore income potential.

At an Official Agent's breakfast launch on 14th June 2023 positive feedback was received from the 114 agents that attended, who noted the level of detail and high standard of finish; the double height entrance and level access, especially notable in a smaller City building; the strong contemporary element of exposed columns; as well as up and running data; and class CAT B fit-out (i.e. fully fitted out and ready for immediate occupation).

The building is now a high-quality offering with a West End feel, augmented further by its position in St Helen's Place and proximity to local transport, including the Elizabeth Line at Liverpool Street.

The first and sixth floors were let prior to completion and letting activity continued with the second, fifth, and mezzanine west floors let, meaning that over 50% of the building is let.



5 St Helen's Place

The property remains fully let with all of our tenants agreeing to continue occupying their floors to their lease expiries which are in 2027 and 2028. Over the 2023 recess all of the lighting in the stairwells was replaced with LED, making the building more energy efficient.

100 Bishopsgate

96.1% of the tower is let with 18,000 square feet under offer or about to go under offer, which would take the asset to 98.2% let. There are 20,000 square feet currently available. All the retail units are now let.

Clockwise from left: Exterior of 3 St Helen's Place; Number 3 reception with Front of House Supervisor, Jennifer Martin; View of reception from the mezzanine floor

From the Archivist

Kate Higgins
Archivist

Physical care of the collections has been a focus again this year. Building upon the results of condition surveys of parts of the archive, Colfe Library and object collections undertaken over the last year and a half, a conservation plan was drawn up in the spring to inform conservation work across the Leathersellers' collections going forward.



As a result of this our 17th century portrait of Henry VIII, which normally hangs in the lobby, is currently being conserved by painting and frame conservators who will also create a sealed microclimate within the frame in order to protect the portrait from environmental fluctuations. In addition, three significant documents – the ratification of the Company's ordinances from 1635, the confirmation of arms of the Glovers' and Leathersellers' Companies from 1634 and a key deed of acquisition of the Barnet estate dated 1603 – are being conserved by the Leather Conservation Centre, together with two Colfe Library volumes.

Another focus has been physical and intellectual organisation, with much of this done over the summer by an Archives and Collections Intern, Georgia Sales, who assisted with most areas of archive and collections management. She helped to rearrange the contents of the muniments rooms to increase efficient use of space, contributed to a locations guide for these, and undertook a stocktake of the maps and plans and the prints collection, put these items in order and catalogued any discovered to be uncatalogued. Additionally, to complement the archive catalogues she started to create individual index records for prominent historical Leathersellers; this is the start of an ongoing project that will result in an invaluable and useful resource.

This year has seen the start of Leatherseller involvement in two exciting digital library cataloguing projects, the Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC) and the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), which will increase the discoverability and accessibility of the Colfe Library and the Company's institutional historic library and has already added to our knowledge of these printed collections.

So far 208 Colfe Library volumes dating from before 1651 have been added to the USTC, a catalogue created by the University of St Andrews that will ultimately contain entries for all known publications in the world dated up to 1700, and a further number will be added to the catalogue soon, together with pre-1651 books from the Leathersellers' institutional library. Colfe Library and Company library books dated 1651-1700 will be added to the USTC in due course in the project's next phase of work starting in September. Excitingly, inclusion in the USTC has already shown that many Colfe Library books are extremely rare, and indeed that some are currently thought to be unique, with no other copies presently known to the USTC anywhere in the world.

Details of relevant 17–18th century books from the Leathersellers' institutional library are being added to the ESTC, a catalogue run by the British Library that aims to contain entries for all known pre-1800 books written in English or published in an English-speaking country. So far 13 works have been added, one of which transpires to be unique: a 1796 collected edition of Acts of Parliament relating to leather, hides and bark. All relevant Colfe Library books will also be added to the ESTC over the coming year.

Other collections-focused work has included the processing of various transfers and deposits of archive and

collections material. The bulk of this has consisted of internal records received from colleagues, but also some external deposits such as the Leathersellers' Company Technical College material described on page 99.

Outreach, promotion and access has continued apace. Displays of archive and Colfe Library material were put out for events over the year, including the annual Wardens' briefing and evening receptions for Colfe's and LFS teachers and student grantee alumni. In September 2022 Leathersellers' Hall opened to the public for the annual Open House Festival, with five hour-long tours attended by over 100 participants. The tours prompted much positive feedback from the attendees, who were particularly grateful for our flexibility in light of the disruption caused by the death of Her Majesty The Queen just two days beforehand. It was a pleasure to lead these tours, together with many other tours of the Hall during the year including the first visits by Leathersellers' Federation of Schools Year 7 students since before the pandemic, and visits from Colfe's Year 7. A tour for Prendergast Year 12 History students accompanied a learning session that gave them the opportunity to handle original historic documents and learn about both the importance of primary sources and the jobs of archivists, curators and rare book librarians in managing these.

The collections have been much used to support internal and external research this year. In addition to providing



sources for answering information requests, they were accessed in person by researchers exploring topics such as the use of gilt leather interior decorations 1600–1800 and those who worked in the gilt leather trade; the influence of the design of royal charters on that of Elizabethan and Jacobean limned letters on vellum to foreign kings and princes; politics and religion during the English Civil War; the artist George Stubbs and his circle; and fraudulent goods, counterfeit craft production and consumer protection in late medieval London. Records consulted ranged from Court minutes, Wardens' accounts, Freedom registers and apprenticeship documents to records such as the 1444 and 1604 charters, the Company's ordinances of 1508, historic Hall inventories, and a photograph of a Tin Plate Workers' dinner held at Leathersellers' Hall in 1934.

A new archive-related communications initiative over the past year has been the creation of a series of short YouTube videos called *Stories From the Archive*. Each video focuses on items from the Company's collections and how these tell a story of how the Leathersellers have played a part in national historic events. This series has received positive feedback so far and is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

The Leathersellers' Company is delighted to have loaned the Mercers' Company an item for use in an exhibition being held at Mercers' Hall throughout 2023. On the theme of philanthropy, the exhibition commemorates the 600th anniversary of the death of Richard Whittington in 1423. The item on loan is an engraving of Wood Street Compter, one of the prisons to which the Leathersellers used to donate beer, bread and money to relieve poor prisoners until the mid-19th century, when prisons were nationalised and the law relating to criminalisation of debt changed.



From left to right: Paintings conservator Abby Granville removing old varnish from the portrait of Henry VIII; Archives and Collections Intern Georgia Sales with Basil Bowdler, a PhD student working on the USTC Project, recording rare books from the Colfe Library; Print of Wood Street Compter loaned to the Mercer's Company for an exhibition throughout 2023; Filming *Stories from the Archive* in the Library

Gifts and Acquisitions

Consort Leatherseller's badge

To signify the occasion, during the 2022–2023 Livery year, of the Company having had a male Master's consort for the first time, and in order to provide future consorts with wider options for official jewellery, the Master's gift this year is a Consort's badge as shown in this design by Fred Rich Enamel Design. Currently in production, the badge is hollow formed in matted and textured sterling silver and has a raised edge, giving the effect of a recess to both sides. On the front are the three roebucks passant regardant from the Company's coat of arms, formed of silver with a gold edge, carved and enamelled in red with black antlers and hooves. The back is dished with an applied carved oak leaf in fine silver. In recognition of a key moment in national life, the badge will be stamped with a commemorative hallmark celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III.



Bill Amberg campaign chair

Last December, this fine wood and leather campaign chair was acquired for use in Leathersellers' Hall. The first piece of furniture that Bill Amberg made in 1985, the chair's simple, collapsible and easily re-assemblable design was based on a chair that Bill's grandfather had from the First World War. The chair was remade for Sara Grady and Alice Robinson's Leather from British Pastures exhibition at the London Design Festival in 2022, which was supported by the Leathersellers' Company. All items in the exhibition sourced leather from Grady + Robinson's project British Pasture Leather, the first supply of leather made from the hides of animals raised on regenerative farms in the United Kingdom.



Leathersellers' Company's Technical College items

The Reverend Christopher Strong, former Honorary Chaplain to the Company, has generously deposited two items that belonged to his father John Patteson Strong and date from the latter's time studying at the Leathersellers' Company's Technical College in the 1920s. John enrolled on his course on 28 September 1925 and the first item, a handwritten book of notes for Practical Laboratory – covering topics such as chrome tanning analysis and the estimation of nitrogen in lime liquors – was begun just two days later. This is the only example of College student work we have in the archives. Reverend Strong also deposited a College group photograph for the academic year 1926–1927, which helps to fill a gap in our photographic record. Both of these items greatly complement our existing College archive material.



Membership

Master and Wardens



Mark Graham Williams

Master 2023–2024

Mark is the fourth generation of the Williams family to be elected Master Leatherseller. He was admitted to the Livery in 1987 and was made a Court Assistant in 2011, having served as Fourth Warden for 2008–2009. Until recently Mark was a Governor of Colfe's School in Lewisham and chaired its Finance and General Purposes Committee. He has also represented the Company at skiing, sailing and shooting, with varying degrees of success.

Mark was educated at Sherborne and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, from which he was commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Artillery to help win the Cold War. This entailed quite a lot of ski racing and playing rugby as well as the odd visit to the Arctic and South Atlantic. After 14 years' service, ten changes of address and, by then, a wife and three children, Mark moved to the commercial world. Having worked for major technology companies such as Lucent Technologies and Adobe, Mark now advises and helps founders of, and investors in, early-stage high growth technology companies.

He has been married to Jane for over 40 years, his three daughters are all Leathersellers and there are currently eight grandchildren. Mark is an avid sports fan and still ski races – increasingly slowly. His other interests include sailing, rugby, wine, military history and barbecuing, though not necessarily in that order.

“We have covered a significant amount of ground over the course of the last year, and yet, there is more to do to embed and realise our ambitions, fulfilling our potential as an organisation as we safeguard our heritage and traditions whilst becoming a modern, relevant, attractive, and – over time – a more sustainable and diverse organisation that will endure for future generations.”

– Mark Williams, Master



Nicholas Tusting

Second Warden

Nicholas is the second son of Past Master John Tusting. He became a Liveryman in 1984, served as Third Warden in 2008 and was admitted to the Court in 2011.

After attending Shrewsbury School and reading Natural Sciences at Cambridge University, he was commissioned into the Royal Navy where he served in HMS Coventry during the Falklands War. Following his career in the Navy Nick completed an MBA at Cranfield University and joined the family leather business.

Nick has been married to Sara for 37 years and they have four children, three of whom are Liverymen, and five grandchildren. Together they run a shoe sourcing business and a small farm that includes a herd of British White cattle.

Nick is an enthusiastic sailor and this hobby takes him to the West Coast of Scotland each year. He has also built boats using traditional methods, is an active member of the Arts Society, and has a keen interest in naval history, walking and regenerative farming.



James Paul Kingsley Russell

Third Warden

James Russell was admitted to the Freedom by Patrimony in 1998 and joined the Livery in 2004. He has served as a Colfe's School Governor since 2017 and as a Director of Colfe's Leisure Services Ltd since 2018. He served as Steward in 2013.

James was educated at Felsted and then studied for a BA Hons in English and Social and Economic History at Manchester Metropolitan University. He has enjoyed a long career in the finance, leasing and vehicle procurement sectors and is now both a Shareholding Director of a vehicle procurement business as well being Head of Sales for the UK for a global leasing company.

James lives in Fleet in Hampshire and has been married to Geraldine, a teacher, for over 25 years. They have a daughter, Imogen, and two sons, Oliver and Oscar. James has a keen interest in travel, nature, wildlife and ornithology. He is an avid sports fan and is an active runner and a keen golfer as well as a Level 2 cricket coach and a lifelong West Ham United fan.



Nicholas Oliver Preston

Fourth Warden

Nick was admitted to the Livery in 1995, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather (Master in 1976). He served as Steward in 2014 and has sat on the Property Committee since 2016.

Nick was educated at the King's School, Canterbury, and Exeter University, where he studied chemistry. He then trained and qualified as a chartered surveyor. He has worked his entire career as a property investment manager, first for CBRE Investment Management and then Grosvenor, most recently being CEO of Tritax EuroBox plc. He has been responsible for commercial property portfolios across the UK and, more recently, Europe, covering all sectors of the market for a wide range of different investors. His current focus is on continental European logistics investments, managing portfolios of very large logistics properties around Europe.

He has an abundance of children; of his four eldest Harriet, Alex and Fred are all working and are Liverymen or Freemen of the Company, and the fourth, Milly is just starting university in Newcastle. Nick has been married to Sarah for just over five years and they have two children, Beatrice and Maddie, aged two and one.

When not parenting Nick enjoys Scottish pursuits, skiing, rugby, cricket, cooking and wine.

Stewards

Our Stewards for the coming year are **Oliver Buckley**, Director of Taso Advisory; **Sophie Collett**, Operations Director at Manifesto Growth Ltd and daughter of Mark Williams (Master 2023–2024); **Sarah Barr**, Managing Director of Al Fresco Feasts Ltd and daughter of retired Liveryman Major George Preston; and **Alexander Emley**, Associate Director of Willis Towers Watson and son of Past Master Miles Emley.



Stewards from left to right: Alexander Emley, Sophie Collett, Sarah Barr, Oliver Buckley

Election Day Service 2023

This year's Election Day Service was held at St Botolph's without Bishopsgate on 21st June 2023 and was led by the Honorary Chaplain the Revd Dr Ben Sargent, with the sermon given by Honorary Liveryman and former Bishop of London the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Lord Chartres.

The theme of the sermon was spiritual gifts, as referenced in 1 Corinthians 12, and how spiritual growth both helps and is nurtured by the sense of community inherent in Company life, activity and values – in contrast to the lack of spirit or humanity evident in the AI technology so prevalent in modern society.

The congregation enjoyed a musical arrangement of the lyrics *Our Roots*, words centred on the theme of unity and commonality, which was sung by a mixed choir of pupils from Colfe's School and Prendergast Vale School.

Admissions and Retirements

Having served as an Assistant for 21 years, Past Master **Anthony Thornton** KC retired from the Court in July 2023. He served as Master in 2015–2016 and as Third Warden in 1997–1998. He was admitted to the Livery in 1976 and has therefore been a Liveryman for 47 years. This year also saw the resignation of **Philip Williams** from the Court after 11 years of service, Philip remains a member of the Livery. We are grateful to them both for their years of dedication and service to the Company.

We were delighted to welcome **Mark Berman** as a new Assistant in December 2022. Mark, Director of MTB Consulting Solutions, joined the Livery in 1991 and served as Third Warden in 2019–2020. He is the grandson of Roydon Joseph Nicholson (Master 1973–1974) and the son of retired Liveryman Thomas Robert Berman.

Five members have been admitted to the Livery this year: **Bill Amberg**, **Francesca Barrow** (daughter of Antony Barrow), Captain **James Phillips** (son of Edward Phillips), **James Purdon** and **Alexander Preston** (son of Nicholas Preston).

We have welcomed several new Freemen this year: **Robert Barrow** (son of David Barrow), **Alexa Barrow** (daughter of Antony Barrow) and **William Skinner** (son of Paul Skinner) were admitted by Patrimony, while **William Womersley** (son of Biz Womersley), **Nicholas Muirhead** (son of Jonathan Muirhead), **Alice Robinson**, **Ralph-Lewis Diabate**, **Emily Thompson** and **Leyla Kessali** were admitted by Redemption.

Deaths

Sir John David Pound Bt (1946–2022)

Sir John Pound died, aged 75, in August 2022. He was admitted to the Livery in 1977 and served as Fourth Warden 2000–2001 and as a Court Assistant 2004–2005 before emigrating to Australia. He was one of a long line of Leatherseller Pound family members stretching back to 1810, a line including his great-great-grandfather Sir John Pound (Lord Mayor 1904–1905; Master 1893–1894 and 1903–1904) and great-grandfather Sir John Lulham Pound (Master 1928–1929). Sir John was the father of Liveryman Sir Robert John Pound Bt.

David Lee Biscoe (1937–2022)

David Biscoe died, aged 85, in December 2022. He was admitted to the Livery in 1971 and was the brother of Past Master Emeritus Michael Biscoe.

Roger Geoffrey Strong (1943–2023)

Roger Strong died, aged 80, in August 2023. He was admitted to the Livery in 1980 and was the cousin of Liveryman Andrew Brian Strong and past Honorary Chaplain The Reverend Christopher Strong.

Anthony James Posnett (1945–2022)

James Posnett died, aged 77, in November 2022. He was admitted to the Freedom in 1967 and was the grandson of Liveryman Robert Posnett, son of retired Liveryman Charles Posnett and brother of retired Liverymen Christopher Posnett and David Posnett.

Obituaries

Michael Binyon



Graham and Denis were the sons of Brian Daniels a distinguished former Master, whose portrait hung for years in the old Hall. The two, both of whom were early and enthusiastic Liverymen, were hard to tell apart – although Graham, a teetotaler, never had a drink in his hand, while his brother was a knowledgeable wine expert.

Born in 1933, Graham was educated at Rugby and Worcester College, Oxford, where he won a Blue in both tennis and squash. He served in the Royal Artillery during National Service and then joined the family tanning business in Salisbury, his hometown for most of his life. After 13 years in the leather industry, he worked as a management consultant before joining a firm of financial advisers. He was a commuter for many years as a result, but almost always managed to get back for his weekly musical commitments of a choral society on Tuesday, a chamber choir on Thursday, and the local orchestra on a Friday, for which he was principal flute and chairman for decades. He married Dordie and they had a son, Charles, and a daughter, Julia.

Admitted to the Freedom in May 1954, Graham became a Liveryman only five months later, serving as Steward in 1973–1974 and Third Warden in 1978–1980. He joined the Court in 1984 and over the next 24 years was involved at various points in almost all the Company committees: Policy, Estates, Privileges, Charities Grants, Universities Exhibitions, Colfe's Educational Foundation, House and Records and, ironically, the Wine Committee. His main contribution, however, was as a member of the Finance Committee for 17 years, where his expertise was invaluable. Graham was a vocal advocate for generous financial provision for the Leathersellers' charity grantees, which he knew were to become one of the distinctive features of the Company.

He and Dordie were warm and generous hosts during his year as Master. He instituted the Court visit to Prendergast School in 1992, the first since its founding more than a century earlier, and set a pattern for the annual visit, both before and after the school became part of the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools. To his regret, two Company dinners and a reception at the Hall had to be cancelled because of the bomb damage, but by the end of May a luncheon for the Lady Mayoress was held (with the gas connected the night before) as well as the Masters' and Clerks' Dinner in July, where the guests had to arrive through the back door.

Charles Graham Daniels

Master, 1992–1993

Graham Daniels admitted that some of his year as Master had been filled with "anger and anguish". On a Saturday afternoon in April 1993 a huge IRA bomb in Bishopsgate caused terrible destruction: St Ethelburga's church was wrecked, nearby buildings were torn apart and the Hall suffered extensive damage, with the windows blown out, furniture ruined by shards of shattered glass and debris everywhere. Graham was swiftly on the scene. He said the staff were "superb". The Lord Mayor came round to visit. The Carpenters' Company offered a temporary home in their Hall, and the Leathersellers was swiftly able to carry out most of its normal engagements. It was the second time the Hall had suffered from an IRA terrorist attack in the space of a year.

Graham's good humour, genial manner and enthusiasm kept up morale, and he presided over an otherwise lively year. He had played host to Diana, Princess of Wales when she visited the Hall to see the unveiling of her portrait. While Graham was escorting the Princess around the Hall meeting various groups of people, the Princess noticed twin brother Denis Daniels (Master 1995–1996), took one look at him, and with a quick glance at Graham said: "I wish I had one of those at home – I would not have to get up so early in the morning." Graham also welcomed Rear Admiral Patrick Rowe, the new Clerk, for his first year in office, who overlapped for a while with the retiring Clerk, Captain Neil MacEacharn.



John Gilbert Curtis

Master, 1993–1994

As a long-time member of the Baltic Exchange and then director of Matheson & Company, John Curtis brought a wealth of business and financial expertise to the Leathersellers. He was therefore an invaluable and long-standing member of the Finance Committee, serving on it for some 18 years from 1989. He also played a key role in the Estates and Redevelopment Committees throughout much of the redevelopment of the St Mary Axe estate, which resulted in Exchequer Court.

John was deeply involved in early exploratory talks over the original proposals for the redevelopment of the land now occupied by 100 Bishopsgate. The scheme eventually fizzled out, but the talks gave John wide experience in advising Masters after him, especially Charles Barrow, during the protracted talks on the subsequent more ambitious scheme that led to the relocation of the Hall and the construction of the very tall building on what was to become Leatherseller land, as part of the deal transferring the freehold to the Company. By nature cautious and careful, John wisely insisted that the Company did not need to go ahead with the scheme if it did not obtain the deal it wanted – advice that certainly strengthened the negotiators' hands.

The older brother of twin younger brothers, David and Peter, John was admitted to the Freedom by redemption in 1953 and made a Liveryman the following year. Serving as Third Warden in 1978–1979, he became Second Warden in 1992 and was elected Master in 1993. John was also deeply involved in the Leathersellers' educational interests. He was a trustee of Colfe's Charitable Trust and was Chairman from 1999–2007. His experience and wisdom also meant he served three times, over many years, on the Policy Committee as well as on the Charities Grants, Universities Exhibitions, Privileges and Wine Committees at various points.

John was born in October 1932 and educated at Charterhouse school. He did his national service with the Rifle Brigade (the Royal Green Jackets) and then went up to Worcester College, Oxford, where he graduated in modern languages. For nine years he was a ship broker before moving to Matheson & Company in 1965, becoming a director in 1967 responsible for transport, property and personnel. He was married to Susan, and their two sons Charles and Mark both became Liverymen. His brother David was Master in 2000 and his other late brother Peter was the Company's Honorary Chaplain.

John was always a welcoming figure, especially to younger members of the Livery, and engaged readily and easily with everyone at receptions and dinners. His year as Master coincided with the Company's 550th anniversary, for which a new history of the Company was written and a stained-glass window commissioned for the Hall by the Livery. He noted that his was the only year in the past three when the Hall was not damaged by terrorist bombs. The calendar was uninterrupted, and the Hall itself was fully restored. John was an enthusiastic golfer and was an elegant Edwardian figure when he played for the Company in his plus twos.



Dr Anthony Watson CBE

Master, 2014–2015

Tony Watson came to the Leathersellers only in 2005, thanks to his expertise in finance and investment, his multifarious activities in the City, and his willingness to be an invaluable adviser to the Company over its investment strategy. He was invited to become a Freeman by redemption in 2007 and was admitted the Livery the same day. He then rose rapidly, becoming Fourth Warden in 2011, a Court Assistant in 2012 and then Second Warden the following year. He served as Master in 2014–2015, only seven years after joining the Company – an unusual achievement. It was in recognition of his huge financial experience, his wisdom and connections at a busy time when the Leathersellers' opportunities were expanding.

With a gentle Ulster brogue and twinkling eyes, Tony was hardly the scourge of City fat cats, as he came to be known. Yet the former chief executive of Hermes Pensions Management, where he oversaw £40 billion of pension funds, was ferocious in his attention to detail, his insistence on professional standards

and his intolerance of boardroom complacency and unearned bonuses.

Tony sat on the boards of a huge range of City companies as well as managing investment and pension funds for many top British firms, including Marks and Spencer. He was one of two directors appointed by the Government in 2009 to look after its holding in Lloyds Banking Group in the aftermath of the state rescue plan during the financial crisis. He was also an influential voice in managing one of the world's biggest investment funds, the Norwegian state fund built up from the country's vast North Sea oil earnings. His proudest association was undoubtedly with his native Northern Ireland, where he helped to steer investments in Ulster until his retirement in 2009 and for which he was appointed CBE.

Tony was a details man, with a firm grasp on City practices and values, and he insisted on standards among other board directors. He had little time for lazy executives who were interested only in what he termed "the foolish expenditure of money". Non-executive directors, he said, should earn their fees. It was a principle he applied just as strictly to those he dealt with as an advisor to the Leathersellers or when he played a key role on the Finance Committee looking after the Company's investments, and as Chairman of the Property Committee (2016–2020) where he advocated for the refurbishment of Number 3 St Helen's Place.

He met his wife Janie at a lunch with mutual friends in Chancery Lane in 1967 and they married in 1972. They had three children, and Janie played an active role in the Company during his year as Master. He proudly rowed in the Leathersellers' cutter in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Thames River Pageant, 2012 – the oldest oarsman by a good twenty years. He also skied enthusiastically with the Company in Morzine; won a joint golfing trophy; and enjoyed a fine visit to the Queen's Dragoon Guards in Germany where he drove a tank with great enthusiasm.

Tony's wide interests included rugby (he once played for London Irish's first XV), history and academic research. He also became increasingly interested in the law – so much so that he read for the Bar in his spare time and qualified as a barrister. He was called to the Bar in 1976, was a bencher at Lincoln's Inn (and a financial adviser) and his memorial service was held in Lincoln's Inn chapel.

The Court

Master

Mark Williams

2nd Warden

Nicholas Tusting

3rd Warden

James Russell

4th Warden

Nicholas Preston

Immediate Past Master

Clare Lennon

Stewards

Oliver Buckley
Sophie Collett
Alexander Emley
Sarah Barr

Senior Member

Charles Barrow

Court of Assistants

Miles Emley
Matthew Pellereau
Martin Pebody
Ian Russell MBE
Antony Barrow
Michael Bradly Russell
Christopher Barrow
Jonathan Muirhead OBE DL
Gavin Bacon
Martin Dove
David Barrow
James Lang
Richard Chard
Timothy Fooks
Hamish Williams
Sean Williams
Caspar Williams
William Cock
Alistair Tusting
Mark Berman

Committees

Policy

Mark Williams
Nicholas Tusting
Clare Lennon
Charles Barrow
Matthew Pellereau
Gavin Bacon
Timothy Fooks
Alistair Tusting

Property

Charles Barrow
Nicholas Tusting
Nicholas Preston
William Cock
Andrew Rothery
Gregory Jones KC
James Purdon
Alexander Emley

Charity

Richard Chard
Nicholas Tusting
James Russell
Antony Barrow
Caspar Williams
Mark Berman
Jasper Holmes
Julian Spurling
Parminder Nahl
Harriet Stewart
Sarah Barr
Robert Mullen

Education

Christopher Barrow
Nicholas Tusting
Nicholas Preston
Matthew Pellereau
Andrew Rothery
Elizabeth Womersley
Angela Brueggemann
David Sheppard
Sophie Miremadi
Sophie Binyon
Oliver Buckley

Finance

Martin Dove
Nicholas Tusting
James Russell
Charles Barrow
Christopher Barrow
Miles Emley
David Barrow
Sean Williams
Richard Preston
Sophie Collett

Membership

Mark Williams
Nicholas Tusting
Clare Lennon
Martin Pebody
Ian Russell
Antony Barrow
Michael Bradly Russell
Jonathan Muirhead

Leather Trade

Alistair Tusting
Nicholas Tusting
James Russell
Ian Russell
Jonathan Muirhead
James Lang
Edward Kershaw
Andrew Bailey
Jonathan Loxston
William Amberg
Alice Robinson

Young Livery

Serena Cooke
Ivan Kiwuwa
Thomas Santa-Olalla
Talulla Rendall
Francesca Barrow
Alexander Preston
Emily Patrick
Eleanor Bellfield
Ralph-Lewis Diabate

Introducing the Honorary Chaplain Staff News



on early Christian writers, following a doctorate many years ago at Oxford, and I play the piano. I am possibly the only vicar in the Church of England with a harpsichord in his study!

Of course, I am keen to help the Leathersellers' Company cherish its Christian inheritance and draw inspiration from it. I was introduced to the Christian faith as a teenager and have sought very much to live according to the sentiment of the Company's motto: 'Soli Deo Honor et Gloria' (Honour and Glory to God Alone). These words remind me of the need both for personal humility and for great ambition regarding what can be achieved for the common good. As a Christian I understand that I really bring nothing to offer God but empty hands, ready to receive the mercy and forgiveness he has provided in Jesus Christ.

It is a great delight to introduce myself as the new Honorary Chaplain. I have enjoyed meeting with members so far at some of this year's wonderful events such as the carol service last December and Election Day Service in June.

If you have read the Trollope's "Barchester Chronicles", you will have come across Mr Quiverful, a country vicar with an exasperated wife and far too many children. My situation is rather similar (though my wife seems to be taking it all in her stride with our mere seven children). I am the vicar of the New Forest Edge Churches benefice in Hampshire, which includes the villages of Burley, Bransgore, Sopley and Hinton Admiral, as well as a very decent amount of the national park. I have three curates, so I'm not too busy.

It is such a blessing to live and serve where I do, and I take great advantage of it by cross-country running, cycling and sea swimming. I think our church may be the only one in the country with an open-water swimming group which meets all year (and wetsuits are certainly frowned upon). I also find time to undertake academic research

Two of my sons attend Christ's Hospital School, another ancient City of London foundation inspired by the desire to bring glory to God by improving the lives of others. We, as a family, have benefitted from the good legacy of our forebears through this, and it is a privilege to serve in some small way with another organisation that seeks to bless others through charity and education.

As Honorary Chaplain I will be here to support and encourage members and staff as they carry forward this 600-year-old legacy.

**The Revd Dr Ben Sargent,
DPhil (Oxon)**



Luis at the Gatehouse of St Helen's Place

Head of Grants Natalia Rymaszewska returned from maternity leave in March 2023. In August 2023 Stacey Lamb, who had undertaken the role of Interim Head of Grants as maternity cover for Natalia, joined as a permanent member of staff in the newly-created role of Head of Charity Grants, reporting to Natalia.

We welcomed David Langthorne as Assistant Butler in January 2023, and Luis Soares de Pina as Estate Housekeeper in August 2023 after saying farewell to Spencer Carter in December 2022. We are grateful for Spencer's commitment to the Company during his time with us.

The team was joined by Georgia Sales, Archives and Collections Intern, for 12 weeks from July 2023.

Coronation Anointing Screen

The Anointing Screen, used at the anointing of His Majesty the King during the most sacred moment of his Coronation earlier this year, was gifted by the City of London Corporation and a number of Livery Companies including the Leathersellers' Company. Its central design shows a tree representing the 56 Commonwealth member countries, with the addition of the King's cypher, decorative roses, angels and a scroll containing a quotation from Julian of Norwich. In recognition of His Majesty's advocacy and support for

the preservation of heritage craft skills, the project to design and create the Anointing Screen was a collaboration between specialists in traditional crafts as well as users of contemporary skills and techniques.

The carpet in our Reception Room has an intriguing link to the Anointing. Its complex geometric design of concentric, interlocking circles within a square border, heavy with cosmological symbolism, is inspired by Westminster Abbey's medieval Cosmati Pavement on which the Anointing took place.



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The Leathersellers

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