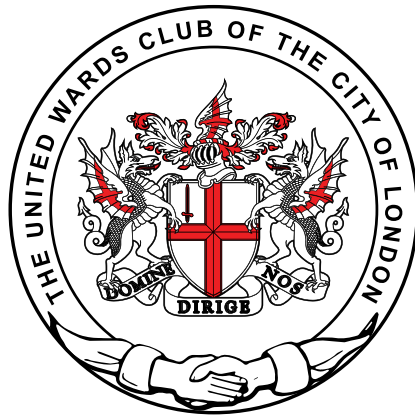




THE UNITED WARDS CLUB
OF THE CITY OF LONDON
PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF 2025- 2026

PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF 2025- 2026

Membership

We achieved a small increase in membership this year despite some resignations and deaths. However, further growth and stronger retention remain priorities. The 10% discount on key events has helped demonstrate value, but additional initiatives should be explored. Our WhatsApp group has only 59 members—less than a quarter of the Club—so we should consider how to increase participation in this effective communication channel.

Continuity

The Board has worked extremely well together throughout the year. Following his accident, Michael Heathcote stepped down, and I am grateful for his contribution. I thank the Board for their support and commitment to future leadership. A key achievement has been bringing City of London Ward Clubs together; while some thrive and others struggle, our aim is to work together and support all of them.

Events

All events I attended during my year are listed here as guidance for future Presidents. Unless marked as “guest,” I personally covered the cost for myself and Corinna.

Thank you

The Club succeeds through teamwork, and I thank all members for their support during my presidency. My thanks go to the Board; my stewards, Andrew Howard and Efraim Ie; the Clerk; my chaplain, Jeremy Crossley; Emma Woods; Nicky Oliver, who produced the excellent brochures and calendar; and Hanna Ali for assisting the remaining members without email. I am especially grateful to my Consort, Corinna, for her constant support.

I wish my successors every success and look forward to celebrating our 150th anniversary in 2027.

Chris Edge, President 2025-2026

16 March 2026

2025

- 20th February - Tower Ward Club's Spring Luncheon at the RAF club, representing President Dhruv Patel
- 3rd March - Billingsgate Ward Club's civic lunch, representing President Dhruv Patel at the Guildhall
- 17th March - UWC AGM & installation at the Guildhall

The installation dinner was again held in the Livery Hall at Guildhall. The guest speaker was Lord Ahmed of Wimbledon, who gave a brilliant speech using an A5 size paper with notes made during the dinner. The President welcomed all the members and guests and mentioned his theme for the year was religious tolerance and would be organising visits to enlighten members.



Other principle guests included Baroness Margaret Eaton of Cottingley DBE, DL, Lars Anderson, Master of the WC World Traders, Philipa White, Master of Aldersgate Ward Club, Mutiat Ibrahim President of JCI London, Alvan Seth-Smith Chairman of Walbrook Ward Club, Edward Bottomley Master of Billingsgate Ward Club, Cliff Rust Chairman of Royal Society of St George CLB & Asif Malik President of the

Wimbledon Society, Andrew Marsden Past Sheriff, together with several Past Presidents, including the senior Past President Pat Campfield MBE.



The carpet guard was provided by the Newham Unit of Volunteer Police Cadets.

- 31st March - Corinna attended the Turners' Company Consorts' Event
- 4th April - UWC event at Westminster Abbey

Friday night's visit to Westminster Abbey had everything required of a very special event indeed: front-row seats in the Quire for Evensong, an exclusive tour led by one of the senior clergy once everyone else had left, and a reserved table at a superb nearby Italian restaurant - and, of course, a delightful group attending! *(Clockwise from top left: examining the banners of the Order of the Bath in the Henry VII Chapel, the zenith of English Perpendicular architecture; the group in front of the historic Cosmati Pavement, the scene of coronations; the Coronation Chair; at the tomb of Sir Isaac Newton; dinner at Colosseo.)* In the absence of the regular choir during Lent, Hertford Chamber Choir treated us at Evensong to some beautiful lesser-known music, a striking unaccompanied Latin setting of the Canticles by Palestrina followed by an Ave Maria by the great pianist-composer Franz Liszt.



(Clockwise from top left: examining the banners of the Order of the Bath in the Henry VII Chapel, the zenith of English Perpendicular architecture; the group in front of the historic Cosmati Pavement, the scene of coronations; the Coronation Chair; at the tomb of Sir Isaac Newton; dinner at Colosseo.)

We were then fortunate indeed to have as the guide for our tour Canon Anthony Ball, shortly before he leaves the Abbey to take up a new position in Rome as the Anglican representative to the Holy See, a post to which he will surely be ideally suited as a former diplomat. Canon Ball proved a font of knowledge, effortlessly unravelling such terms as ‘Royal Peculiar’ and the ‘Order of the Bath’ with admirable clarity. He began by explaining the Abbey as the scene of coronations stretching back a thousand years, with recent events having revived the unique symbolism of the celebrated Coronation Chair. We then heard about the Abbey as the place of worship it has become today, following a chain of extraordinary historical events over the centuries. The whole tour was framed by the theme of Westminster Abbey as the home of national memorials. First, we heard a moving account of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior (whose identity, nationality and religion remain a mystery to this day), and our attention was later drawn to memorials to such great figures as Sir Isaac Newton, Stephen Hawking, Robert Peel, Chaucer, Shakespeare and Handel.

Before the tour’s conclusion at Poets’ Corner, we passed the sites of so many royal burials, from Edward the Confessor (the Abbey’s original royal founder) to Henry III, Richard II and Henry VII, separately responsible for the building we know today – the reminder that Elizabeth I lies so close to both Mary I and Mary, Queen of Scots never fails to stop you in your tracks!

It was excellent that several club members were able to join the group afterwards for a superb meal at Colosseo, which gave the opportunity to come back down to Earth in the most convivial company. All in all, a most inspiring start to Chris Edge’s year as President. We are extremely grateful to him and to Corinna for organising.

Stephen Willis, Junior Vice-President

- 11th April - Farringdon Ward Club Civic Lunch at the Guildhall
- 23rd April – Guest of the Royal Society of St George, City Branch St Georges Banquet at Drapers Hall, hosted by Chairman, and also a UWC past president Cliff Rust.



- 30th April - The memorial service for Past President Graham Redcliffe on 30th April, representing the Club. It was a well-attended event and a good send-off for our Past President.
- 9th May - The UWC tour of Freemasons Hall, on 9th May, which was enjoyed by everyone attending. Members and guests had a wonderful early-evening guided tour of Freemasons Hall on Great Queen Street,

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808	KNIGHTSBRIDGE	2974	AND
809	UNITED WARDS	2978	UNIT
812	FRIERN BARNET	2987	WAN
816	ROYAL KEW	2989	WEST
817	MIDDLESEX	3012	LAVEN
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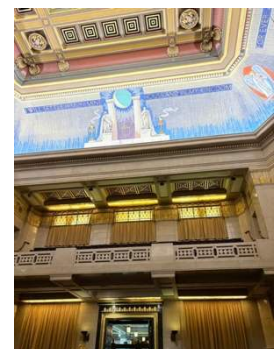
close to Covent Garden. The tour started in the museum, where the Curator, Dr Mark Dennis, showed us the two Loving Cups and other City regalia from the now closed United Wards Lodge 2987, items which had then been passed on to the UWC and are now on permanent



loan to the Museum. When our guide, Patrick, took over the tour, Mark chipped in from time to time to highlight additional items of interest as we went around the Museum. We were then led into the antechamber to the Grand Lodge, where we looked at the spectacular window, presented by Lincolnshire Freemasons, with the names of all those Freemasons who were killed during the First World War.



At the culmination of the tour Patrick took us into the Grand Temple, the very heavy doors of which my wife Corinna and Mary Hardy, Senior Vice President, managed to open with just a single finger on each door! The inside of the temple is fabulous, with the stunning mosaic ceilings particularly impressive.



It is worth explaining that whilst Freemasons used to be for men, 2 women's masonic organisations now work together. Perhaps most notable to say that after the Lottery, the Masonic charities are the largest charity in the UK. In London, for example, the masons paid for the air ambulance and the 2 very tall leaders for the

London Fire Brigade. Corinna and I met a firefighter in our gym who actually gets a thrill going to the top of the ladder; rather him than me!

Before leaving, we had a group photo as a memento of the occasion and to prove we really had been granted access to this remarkable and exclusive building!

Although some of the group could not stay, some other members and guests joined us for supper at the nearby Côte restaurant; 15 of us had a lovely meal, with free-flowing wines, so we forgot how late it was when we left!

- 19th May - The UWC MMPR meeting, via Zoom
- 20th May - The UWC Events committee via Zoom
- 2nd June - The Ward Clubs Forum, chaired by the Late Lord Mayor, Alderman Michael Mainelli, which was attended by all but 2 wards. A good reaction from everyone, and a great lunch in the Members' Private Dining Room, in Guildhall, afterwards.
- 4th June - The Royal Society of St George's installation dinner in Guildhall.
- 5th June - UWC Civic lunch,

We were honoured to receive our Patron, The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Alderman Alastair King DL and the Lady Mayoress, at our Civic Lunch held in The Crypt, St Etheldreda's Church. We were equally pleased to receive both Sheriffs, Alderman & Sheriff Gregory Jones KC and Sheriff David Chalk, along with his consort, Mrs Miranda Chalk. The Lord Mayor and both Sheriffs praised the selection of the Crypts as a nice change from the normal City venues, with great food.

We should have had the reception in the garden, but sadly, the English weather got the better of us.

It proved no problem, however, resorting to our back-up plan of the far end of the ancient Crypt, which, given its remarkable ambience, turned out to be a superb alternative. Thank you, Reverend Prebendary Jeremy Crossley, for starting us off with Grace. We enjoyed fabulous food, prepared by the Bleeding Hart restaurant, and the Lord Mayor said the food was delicious and the venue was a lovely change from the normal suspects. Other notable guests included Andrew Marsden, Past Sheriff and



Chairman of the Royal Society of St George, and Vanessa Dal Busco, President of Aldgate Ward Club.



May I thank my two Stewards, Andrew Howard and Efraim Ie for meeting, greeting and helping guests down the steps because of the inclement weather. Efraim also acted as the banner bearer. A big thank you to Millan Sachania for playing the music. A huge thank you to Emma Woods, who orchestrated the whole event.

Finally, thank you to all the Past Masters, members and guests who supported the event.

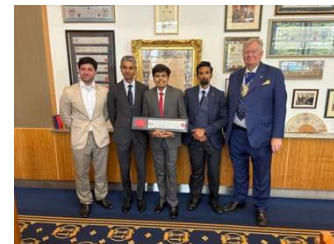
- 6-8th June - The Lord Mayor's Livery Masters weekend in Aberdeen, which was a fun but exhausting time. The Princess Royal attended the first night and must have spoken with each of the 200+ attendees during the night. The second night was a Ceilidh with around 240 people, and I surprised myself (urged on by Corinna) taking part in most of the Scottish dances. The final day we visited Balmoral Castle, which was pleasant, but very wet!



- 9th June – I was unable to attend the UWC Finance & Investment committee via Zoom as I was flying back from Aberdeen,
- 20th June - Met with Bivas Ambasada to discuss him taking on the role of minute secretary.
- 21st & 22nd June - Corinna attended the Consorts 2 day stained glass workshop, hosted by the WC of Glaziers, and she designed and made a great stained glass panel surrounded by lead.



- 23rd June – Attended Aman Bakshi's terrific Freedom ceremony at the Guildhall followed by lunch in the members dining room.
- 25th June - UWC walk and supper. A fantastic walk guided by Stephen Willis and a super supper afterwards.



Is it a Film? Is it a Book? Is it a Play? Is it a Song? A United Wards Club Walk through the City of London led by Junior Vice President, Stephen Willis

On a glorious midsummer late afternoon, members of the United Wards Club and their guests — 17 in all — congregated at Tower Hill to begin a most enlightening and enjoyable walking tour. Under the unrivalled guidance of Junior Vice President Stephen Willis — a qualified City of London guide — we explored the City's rich tapestry of literary, cinematic, dramatic and musical connections, punctuated by visits to some of its most significant churches, in honour of our President's theme of religious tolerance.

Our journey began opposite the Tower of London — a looming presence in Hilary Mantel's Wolf Hall trilogy, which charts the rise and fall of Thomas Cromwell.

Two acclaimed television adaptations followed, starring Sir Mark Rylance, though, as Stephen revealed, the Tower scenes were filmed not on location but at Dover Castle. The Tower also plays a key role in *A Man for All Seasons* (1960), a play (later a film) centred on the life of Sir Thomas More, executed there in 1535. And it continues to fascinate film directors, having appeared in *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation* (2015),



Paddington 2 (2017), and *Spider-Man: Far from Home* (2019).

A short stroll brought us to Trinity Square Gardens, where we heard about Tower Green, the site within the Tower walls where several noblemen and a few Queens met their end. Stephen spoke learnedly about the operatic interpretations of these events, including Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* (1830) and Roberto Devereux (1837), which charts the downfall of the Earl of Essex, executed in 1601.

From there, we turned into Seething Lane, stopping at the wonderful statue of

Samuel Pepys. Stephen drew our attention to the music that winds around the statue — a song set to music by Pepys himself to the words “Beauty Retire” — and proceeded to sing it, much to the company’s delight (and showcasing his own training as a singer and musician).

A few steps away is St Olave's, Hart Street, the church that captivated Charles Dickens and Sir John Betjeman alike. Dickens gave it the rather Gothic nickname "St Ghastly Grim" and described it vividly in *The Uncommercial Traveller*: "One of my best beloved churchyards, I think, is that of St. Ghastly Grim, which is also called St. Olave's, Hart Street. A small, small churchyard, with a ferocious strong spiked iron gate, like a jail. But the gate is ornamented with skulls and cross-bones, and the churchyard is ornamented with skulls and cross-bones, and the church is ornamented with skulls and cross-bones, and the very gateposts are surmounted by skulls and cross-bones."

Pepys referred to it as "our own church"; he and his wife lie buried within, their busts placed opposite one another — hers with a gaze that seems sternly to chide him for his misdemeanours, although in truth she died long before him. Betjeman wrote of this church in *First and Last Loves* with typical affection: "St Olave's, Hart Street, is a country church — an East Anglian church on holiday in the City."

Our trail continued to Minster Court, which featured in the *101 Dalmatians* (1996) — the successor to the cartoon version — and then into Leadenhall Market, recognisable to Harry Potter fans as Diagon Alley in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001). We then passed near the Jamaica Wine House, formerly a coffee house frequented by Pepys. The Jamaica Wine House and its surrounding alleyways provided the backdrop for *The Riot Club* (2014), a satire on wealth and excess inspired by the notorious Bullingdon Club at Oxford. It says enough, perhaps, that both David Cameron and Boris Johnson were members of this elite fraternity.

Onto Lombard Street, where we paused at the George & Vulture Tavern, the favourite haunt of Charles Dickens and the base of the Pickwick Club in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836). At No. 1 Lombard Street once lived Dickens's first great love, Maria Beadnell — her father a manager at Smith, Payne and Smith.

We swivelled next to Change Alley and St Mary Woolnoth, where John Newton — a former slave trader turned abolitionist — served as rector from 1780 to 1807. Newton wrote *Amazing Grace* prior to his incumbency here, inspiring figures such as William Wilberforce.

A highlight of the tour was Drapers' Hall, the stately interiors of which were used in *The King's Speech* (2010) and also served as the interior of a Russian government building in the James Bond film *GoldenEye* (1995).

Our walk concluded at the monumental Bank of England, an institution steeped in financial history and popular with film directors. It features prominently in *Mary Poppins Returns* (2018), for instance.

The walk concluded in the most delight and convivial fashion at The Old Doctor Butler's Head, a public house just off Coleman Street. Over supper in a private upstairs room, we savoured Stephen's encyclopaedic knowledge, wit, musicality and flair. Through Stephen's magical touch, the City of London, for seventy-five minutes, became not just a theatre of finance and ceremony but also a stage for literature, opera and cinema — with our own Junior Vice President commanding the boards and the rest of us privileged to play our part as the supporting cast.

Dr Millan Sachania

- 10th July – The Freeman’s School prize giving with Bivas Ambasad
- 11th July – Aldgate Ward Club Civic Lunch
- 14th July – Guest at the City Livery Club Civic Banquet



- 20th July – “Sherlock Holmes and the Paquetboat Theft” Murder Mystery

On a summer Sunday afternoon in July, a number of UWC members took part in a light-hearted interactive light-hearted murder mystery as they passed along one of the most beautiful stretches of the Thames. Setting off from Maidenhead promptly at noon, we were invited aboard to sip Champagne, attempt “Sabrage” (a ceremonial technique of opening a sparkling wine bottle by striking the neck with a dull blade) and test our knowledge of “Dingbats” (a puzzle quiz that challenge you to find a familiar phrase or name in a unique arrangement of letters, symbols, numbers or pictures), whilst those amongst us who had volunteered were kitted out in the costumes assigned to their various roles – With the various unveilings providing a pre-cursor to the hilarity that would set the tone for this event. Once the cast were in the appropriate ensembles, we made our way into luncheon where, over a delicious three course meal, the scene of the afternoon’s escapade was set: Colonel Holman Stevens, the international shipping magnate, had called upon the services of Sherlock Holmes to investigate the ongoing thefts from his cross-Channel ships, which was believed to be the work of a ruthless gang. Meanwhile the mysterious Captain Basil, a famous explorer, was on board one of the ships returning to England with a valuable haul of gold coins, which he is to present to the British Museum. A murder followed, but the body appeared to be that of an innocent passenger, one Doctor Dietler (the “death” expertly executed – all puns intended!!! – by Past President Dhruv Patel in full Captain Von Trapp ensemble). It was up to those on board to solve the mystery, and join Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson (a star turn from our Senior Vice President Mary Hardy), as they unravelled no less than three crimes and uncovered the secrets to the many unanswered questions in this complex case... Who was Captain Basil? Why was a murder committed? What is the motive for the subsequent blackmail aboard the ship? And who amongst the UWC volunteers would win the coveted prize for “Best attempt at over acting”???



The feedback from those who attended the event was unanimously positive – There was absolute boundless, good-natured laughter at the “acting talents” of several attendees who were the epitome of being a “Good Sport”, throwing themselves into their roles with “Acorn Antiques” level of gusto!!! It is fair to say that the entire “cast” put their own “stamp” on the proceedings, and “Sherlock Holmes and the Paquetboat Theft” Murder Mystery was all the better – and funnier!!! – a production for it... It was also noted that our esteemed host Anthony was “a brilliant Sherlock Holmes!!!”, and that the play booklets, with personalised UWC front covers, that were distributed at the end were also a lovely touch and a charming memento of a fantastic afternoon.



In the words of one attendee: “You could say it was worth ‘a thousand laughs’ and we were certainly very well looked after by the team on board...”

Thank you so much to our President Chris and their Consort Corinna for organising, and to everyone involved who helped to make this yet another successful UWC event.

Emma Woods
UWC Board Director

- 24th July – Brigantes (Northern Liverymen) event in Scarborough



- 2nd August – UWC tour of the AELTC - Wimbledon tennis club and hosted a BBQ at my home afterwards

30 UWC members and their guests joined UWC President Chris Edge and his consort Corinna at the entrance to the AELTCC at Wimbledon on Saturday 2nd of August. The guide for our tour, Joanne next to the statue of Fred Perry the first English man to win the Championship. Wristbands were distributed to ensure access both to the tour and the museum. After a brief introduction to the rules of Wimbledon, i.e. no touching the grass! There was a brief



overview of the Wimbledon site. There are 20 tennis courts but no court 13. There are two show courts, Court no 1 and Centre Court. These courts are fitted with opening roofs which allow all weather play during the Championships. On the way to Court No 1 the group were shown the board which records the daily amount of money raised by reselling tickets for the Wimbledon foundation. In 2025 the amount raised was £195,000. All this money goes to local charitable groups.

On entry to No 1 Court which has 12,345 seats, the group were told how at the end of the championships the courts are completely stripped of their grass covering. This is done using a steam process to avoid using weedkiller chemicals. The grass used to reseed the courts is comprised of 4 types of Rye grass.



Wimbledon aims to make the championships seem like playing a game of tennis in a country garden with an abundance of plants and shrubs that completely cover much of the site. To keep the grounds in pristine condition there are 18 full time employees with an additional group brought in while the Championships are in progress. The predominant colours of the plants are Purple and

green which the group were assured had nothing to do with the Suffragette movement, contrary to popular belief.

On leaving No 1 court there is a beautiful tree sculpture which representing a person serving an Ace with several small animals located in the branches all with a tennis theme. Leaving No 1 court area the group walked past The Hill where fans can watch games on the show courts on a large screen. There was some debate in the group about whether the hill is Henman Hill or Murray Mound, no conclusion was reached!

After visiting Court 18 and seeing how the grass is removed we were taken to the Media Broadcast centre. Here the group were given some facts about the Wimbledon club.

There are only 500 members at any time with Honorary membership given to the winners of the Open Championship. The waiting list is over 20 years but members only pay a modest fee to be members as the club was set up to ensure that people from all levels of society could join and play. There are debenture seats available for Centre and No 1 Courts and these are much sought after. The debenture holder gets one seat on the court for every day of the championships for 5 years. These debentures are bought and sold with one in 2024 going for £118,000. Each year more than 1.95 million strawberries are consumed during the two weeks of the

Championship. May to September is the grass court season and Wimbledon also has indoor and hard surface outdoor courts. During the Championships there are 220 ball boys and girls who are selected after a period of intense training.

On leaving the Media Centre the group made their way to Centre Court passing the Championship winner's boards on the way in. Prior to 1968 the Championships were only for amateur players, but this changed in 1968 with Rod Laver winning the men's contest and Billie Jean King the ladies.

The Centre Court celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2022 and is where the Royal Box is located. Wimbledon is the only Grand Slam venue to have a Royal Box, with many people attending a match on Centre Court being more interested in who is sitting in the Royal Box than the action taking place on the grass. The group then made their way to the Museum, where we took leave of our guide with a vote of thanks from the President.

The group then had time to visit the Tennis Museum before making their way to the President's Home, where a BBQ had been organised. The President and his consort had ensured that everyone was well fed and watered with a chef from a local restaurant cooking up a storm on the BBQ in the garden, and local helpers serving drinks. Despite being in a suburban location, it was likened to being in an English country garden and all present enjoyed themselves.

The President thanked all those present for attending and hoped that everyone had enjoyed the day.

Denice Fennell

Afterwards we had a fantastic BBQ at the President's home, catered by the Aimer Restaurant – the photos say it all.....



- 31st August – Attended the Ham Polo Club and lunch – hosted by Emma Woods for the UWC “Executive”

UWC member and Board Director Emma Woods kindly invited the UWC Board Directors and guests to join her for a day out at Ham Polo Club.



Ham Polo Club is the last remaining of the many clubs that existed as satellites to London's 'Big Three' – Ranelagh, Hurlingham, and Roehampton. The club began life as the Ham Common Polo Club in 1926, with one full sized ground and two smaller grounds. The first ground was next door to Brown Gates House, Church Road, Ham Common, home of the first chairman, Loftus Storey. The full-sized ground lay between Richmond Gates and

Sheen and a regular coach there was Johnny Traill, the first

Argentine 10 goaler, who lived at nearby Roehampton. Ham Common Polo Club, together with Stoke d'Abernon and clubs such as Worcester Park, Kingsbury and Crystal Palace, was ideal for Londoners who did not compete in the major tournaments at the 'Big Three' but who played for the fun of the game. The club continues to play polo between May and September, managed by Lucy Dowie and Manuel Perez, the current President is Geoffrey Godbold. The club's Chairman is Howard Davis who is a long standing player at the club and local resident in Petersham.



We arrived at midday ready to enjoy a superb 2 course lunch and start watching the first match which was the Pandora's Box Cup between the House of Woulfe and Solar de Mendieta teams. Play was slightly delayed due to the ground being soft after a huge downpour earlier in the day but soon got underway. For some UWC members including our President, this was their first experience of watching a polo match and Emma explained some of the rules and terminology including the 'chukka' which is a 7-minute period of play, divided into four, five, or six chukkas in a standard match. At the end of each chukka, a bell rings, and play continues until the ball goes out of bounds or a second bell signals the end of the period. After each goal, teams also switch ends, and a longer break is given at halftime, when spectators can "tread in the divots".



The rain stayed away during the afternoon, and we enjoyed the atmosphere and hospitality to the full. Our President Chris Edge was given the honour of presenting the prizes after the first match and helping to wish player Katie Mclean a happy birthday! The final match was the Peter Pitts Cup between the Berkshire Bengals and Hugs & Co which rounded off our day. It was so successful and exceptionally good value that Emma will be looking at further opportunities to invite us to matches in the future.

Cdr James Nisbet

UWC Board Director

- 12th September – Unfortunately I missed the Wards Club Quiz as I was in Madeira for the Club Holiday

- 15th – 22nd September – Club holiday in Madeira

A week in Madeira with the United Wards Club of the City of London - 2025 Club Holiday



When the United Wards Club announced a holiday to Madeira, I thought ‘wow’, I loved my visit to the Island in 1984, but then I remembered how hilly it was. I was 48 years old then, now I’m in my 90th year and I thought that I would not be able to cope. I remembered a day-long walk on the Levada, and the 10-minute toboggan ride back to Funchal!

Chris and Corinna talked me into coming and said they would ‘look after me’. This involved taxis to places I couldn’t walk to, and bus rides. I was so glad I went - the holiday was amazing!!!

My partner, Garry, of course, came with me. He did a (smaller) Levada walk and realised why I kept talking about it for so many years. He loved it. I met the group at a beautifully sited tea house, and we all enjoyed a lunch there.

Apart from the fabulous restaurants we all went to, we enjoyed Madeira wine tasting at Blandy’s and tasted 13 different wines at D’Oliveiras and nobody got drunk!

The Royal Savoy Hotel was about the best we’ve ever been in, and the service was incredible.



Chris and Corinna excelled in the planning, and we ate too much, and drank too much, BUT WE LOVED IT!

Geoff Kaye and Garry Wykes

Wine on Madeira

Aside from the pleasant wines Chris and Corinna chose to accompany our lunches and dinners, we enjoyed three conducted tastings at Blandy’s Wine Lodge, Barbusano Vineyard and D’Oliveiras Wine Lodge.

At Blandy’s we were given a guided tour of the lodge by a knowledgeable guide and had the opportunity to visit the Wine Museum in the same premises. We tasted three wines: two 10-year-old, a Sercial dry and a Malmsey sweeter, and a 2017 harvest Malmsey. We came away with knowing the process to make Madeira and some of the history of both wine making and the Blandy family over 6 generations.

Our visit to Quinta do Barbusano was extraordinary not least for the long un-paved road to reach the Vineyard, which we had to bounce down. Gina kindly led us through the tasting and generally looked after us. We were to taste 6 wines and have a traditional Madeiran lunch featuring beef skewers grilled on bay laurel sticks,



accompanied by boiled potatoes, salad, and Madeiran flatbread with garlic butter. This was a veritable feast and several had to have a doggie bag. For the wine, we had Barbusano white, rose, and red, two wines that bear the name of the owner, Antonio, as being his special flavour preference. Finally, we had Leve which was beautifully citrus and my own favourite.





Our third visit was to the wine lodge of Pereira D' Oliveira. This turned out to be a rather special tasting. Oliveira was hugely generous, offering us 13 wines to try, after which the President suggested they should stop bringing out more. The oldest and for me the best was a 1905 Reserva Verdelho, mellow but rich with notes of caramel and crème brûlée, delightful.

Colin & Sue Middlemiss



Roger and I were invited by President Chris Edge and his wife, Corinna, to participate in a visit to Maderia staying at the Royal Savoy in Funchal. They planned a wonderful week with great attention to detail to make it run smoothly and take into account everyone's abilities.

The best meals we think ever were eaten were in the Royal Savoy hotel which started and ended our trip. The food was exquisite. Other noon and evening meals were at the best restaurants on the island.

From a Fish restaurant such as Vila Do Peixe at Camara de Lobas, a village where Winston Churchill painted, to a mountain restaurant a mile up from the sea, Abrigo Do Pastor. Not only was the food excellent, the scenery was beautiful with the lush greenery on this volcanic island going on winding narrow roads with the taxi drivers skilfully driving us up into the clouds, it seemed.

We also must have tasted the best of all Maderia wines on the island starting from Blandy's the first full day after we arrived at 10.30 am starting with a tour then tasting and viewing their excellent museum. Later in the week we tasted 13 bottles of all years at D'Oliveiras starting at 11am in the morning which took us until about 1 pm before going to the market for lunch. On Friday we were driven through the island's gorgeous mountain scenery on a private, very narrow road competently driven by our taxi drivers to sample five more Madeira still wines at the Barbusano winery and farm. After tasting, we were served large skewers of beef cooked to our tastes of rare, medium or well done with a delicious salad and potatoes before continuing around to the west of the island. The meals at the pool restaurant of the Royal Savoy were also beautifully presented.



A very relaxed lunch was sitting outdoors after the Lavada walk for over an hour. How much weight did we gain from all food and wine?

We viewed more beautiful, lush mountain scenery by cable car above Funchal, a bird Sanctuary, and to the NE coast Quinta do Furao and Santana. It's really a spectacular island. After being driven through amazing scenery to different directions on the island, we finished the trip with a Dolphin watching cruise on the Sunday with wind, waves and a bit of rain to get a picture of the coastline of Madeira. I really enjoyed that, even though we clung to our seats at times as the boat bounced, but the dolphins put on a

good show for us.

This holiday was one of the best – according to my husband with a very big thank you to Chris and Corinna for the excellent hospitality and planning to make this trip perfect. The other thing that made the trip so special was the wonderful group of people on the trip. We all got on so well and for us it was great getting to know others and learning about their lives. Missed seeing them all after the trip was over, and being told to get ready to go to the next wine tasting for the day.



This trip couldn't have been any better!! Thank you, Chris and Corinna!! Gayle & Roger Farr

- 8th October - City Walk with JVP Stephen Willis - Smithfield to Blackfriars

After battling a variety of challenges thrown at us by modern day TFL a cheery baker's dozen met on a fine overcast (but thankfully dry) Autumnal day at the Barbican Tube entrance. Helpfully, there was only one entrance/exit which simplified the process and it got me thinking "What other stations have just one entrance? Highgate?"



The title of the walk was "Flames and Faith" which tied in beautifully with our President's theme of religious tolerance and we were soon shepherded onwards by our esteemed leader, UWC JVP, Stephen Willis. Our first stop was the Charterhouse. Originally built as a Carthusian priory in 1371 on the site of a plague pit, Carthusian and Charterhouse come from the original priory, Grande Chartreuse where the monks produced the liqueur so the order was silent, not dry.

In 1537, The priory was closed during the Reformation and the Prior and ten monks who would not affirm Henry VIII's claim to be head of the church met most unpleasant ends.



Next, we went to Smithfield, the traditional meat market of London. The site of a livestock market since medieval times although the current buildings were commenced in 1866, designed by architect Sir Horace Jones who was also responsible for Billingsgate and Leadenhall together with Tower Bridge which was only completed after his death. Stephen told us that the meat market was due to close fairly soon and unlike Billingsgate and Covent Garden, there are no current plans to relocate and the actual market will disappear (go "virtual"). However, he also said that the London Museum will use the site for its new home.



Then to St Bartholomew the Great, founded by Prior Rahere in 1123 (he established the hospital at the same time) after he fell ill on a pilgrimage to Rome (probably malaria) and had a vision of St Bartholomew who directed him to establish a religious hospital. I think we would have enjoyed Rahere's sermons because as well as a cleric, he had been a minstrel and jester.

This highly atmospheric church is the oldest to survive the Great Fire and it contains a mixture of ancient and modern: a beautiful icon of Mary and Christ child, the wonderful tomb of Sir Walter Mildmay and wife which our Treasurer would have appreciated as Walter was the founder of Emmanuel College Cambridge and the only work of art by Damien Hirst I have liked, a statue of St Bartholomew. Ask Stephen if you want to know what he has draped over his arm.

Then on to the Smithfield Execution plaques of William Wallace (Braveheart 1305), Wat Tyler (the Peasant's Revolt 1381) and the Protestant Martyrs (1550's). Stephen explained the various modes of execution: Wallace had the full set: Emasculation, Evisceration and then Hanged, Drawn and Quartered; Tyler was stabbed then beheaded while the martyrs were burnt, a fate described by one cleric as "sufficiently mild" for heresy. Then onto Barts Hospital which hosts above its entrance the only statue of Henry VIII in London. We popped into the hospital chapel, St Bartholomew the Less which is small but unusual in its octagonal shape and strolled through the magnificent square.

Next was St Botolph without Aldersgate. St Botolph was the patron saint of travellers and churches dedicated to him were frequently found near city gates so travellers could pray for a safe journey or give thanks for a safe arrival. Postman's Park followed so named as the first General Post Office was nearby and then the Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice which commemorates people who lost their lives saving others. I have travelled extensively and have never seen another memorial like this and I applaud the sentiment.

St Sepulchre without Newgate, the Fusiliers' Church, was next with its blue and burgundy railings, the colours of the regiment. Stephen told us that the last public hanging, was nearby, outside Newgate prison in 1868 of Michael Barrett, a Fenian. Given that the Metropolitan tube line opened in 1863, it is likely that many of the 2,000 attendees got there by tube.

This also means we have a full set: an Englishman, Tyler, a Scot, Wallace and an Irishman, Barrett and as Stephen helpfully pointed out, Wales is a principality not a kingdom and therefore doesn't feature here.



Finally, we passed through Paternoster Square and the oft moved and much restored Temple Bar gate and on to St Paul's and the statue (Edward Bainbridge Copnall, 1970) of Thomas, "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest", Becket. Curiously, the statue was made of coated fibre-glass not bronze and not ageing well.

As we approached our final destination, we gave a salute to the site of The Bell, Carter Lane, where the UWC was founded. Sadly, The Bell no longer exists, but we all enjoyed a relaxed and very convivial lunch at a new eatery, the King's Wardrobe.



Hirst's St Bartholomew

A big thank you to Stephen for a fascinating and very well thought out walk, complete with lots of resting points, through this very interesting and history filled part of the City. I have already spent a fortune on Amazon on follow-up books and am already looking forward to Stephen's next walk.

Martyn Hole



Mildmay's Tomb

- 9th October – RSSG – Visit to Royal Naval College
- 21st October – Zoom Events Committee
- 22nd October – Corinna attended the consorts Livery event at Guildhall
- 24th October – Bread Steet Civic Lunch
- 26th October – Members and Friends at the Guildhall

Due to issues with our original venue Emma Woods quickly arranged for us to use the Guildhall dining room for our members and friends' reception. Another success thanks to Emma.



- 27th October – Zoom Investment & Finance Committee
- 31st October – UWC Founders Day dinner @ Butchers' Hall to celebrate the Club's 148th anniversary

Our members will be glad to know that the traditions of the Club were fully upheld when we gathered at the Butchers' Hall on the last day of October to celebrate the 148th anniversary of Founders' Day.

Tracking back through the archives the proceedings were reassuringly familiar, not least the established 'concluding rite', or perhaps even the centrepiece. This was the reading of the original minutes of the founding meeting held on 31st October 1877.

This was prefaced with an explanation of the event by our Junior Vice President Stephen Willis, who bears an ancestral connection with our founding President...so there will be a certain resonance at this event in 2027 when we reach our 150th anniversary. The room then fell silent as the minutes themselves were read by our present Minute Secretary Hazel Davis, who then proposed the toast to 'our Founders'.

To return to the start of the event, all guests had arrived in good order to be greeted by our President Chis Edge, his consort Corinna and our Senior and Junior Vice Presidents, respectively Mary Hardy and as mentioned Stephen Willis. Foremost amongst our guests was the Guest of Honour Sir David Wootton, who served as the 684th Lord Mayor of London.



All then proceeded to the main hall set out with a top table and sprigs adorned with Club silver. The leading party was clapped in, and after the grace we took our seats to enjoy a splendid meal and accompanying wines. The President proposed toasts to The King, Queen Camilla, the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the Royal Family and finally to the Lord Mayor, the City of London Corporation and the Sheriffs.

The President was first to speak, paying tribute to the "small group of visionary men who had gathered with a single purpose to create a society that would stand for community, service and fellowship". In that spirit he reemphasised his vision for religious tolerance and then acknowledged the several dignitaries adding to the grandeur of the occasion. He concluded by proposing the toast to Our Guests.



In response, Sir David Wootton then treated us to a characteristically entertaining and eclectic speech ranging from the irregular geometry of livery halls (including the Butchers'), to the origin of the name of his former ward 'Langbourn'; apparently a local mispronunciation of 'Lombardy' whence many early bankers originated! Sir David then proposed the toast to The United Wards Club of the City of London.



The conclusion of the event was where this account began, by revisiting the moment when our club was founded. The room (according to Sir David) may have lacked symmetry, but the proceedings were in perfect alignment with our history.

Andrew Howard

- 3rd November – Garden of remembrance at St Paul's and lunch at Grocer's Hall where the President laid a cross in remembrance of the war dead.



- 8th November – Lady Mayor’s show in carriage, attending the loyal oath at the Royal Courts



- 11th November – UWC Bevis Marks Synagogue visit and supper

On the 12th of November 2025, members and guests had the privilege of visiting Bevis Marks Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in the United Kingdom still in use. Despite ongoing refurbishment works, we were warmly welcomed and given the opportunity to explore the interior of this remarkable building! Almost every architectural element has a story; the 12 prominent columns representing the 12 Tribes, the 7 delightful chandeliers representing the Sabbath, and many other aspects that were kindly explained by Rabbi Shalom Morris.

Rabbi Morris shared fascinating insights into the history of the synagogue itself. He detailed its founding in 1701, its survival through centuries of social and political change, and the unique features that make it an enduring symbol of the Jewish community in the UK.



In addition to the synagogue’s history, we learned more about how the experiences of Jewish communities over centuries shaped their religious and cultural practices, and how these traditions are reflected in the synagogue’s ongoing use. It was inspiring to see the deep connection between history, faith, and the living community that continues to sustain the building.

Before leaving, we had a group photo to mark the occasion of a remarkable visit to this space.

After the visit, members and guests joined us for supper at the nearby For a restaurant where we enjoyed a lovely evening meal! A brilliant club tradition to neatly close the visit and reflect on the unique experience.

Looking forward to the next event

Rishi Lal

- 17th November - Zoom Events committee
- 20th November - The Ward Clubs Forum, Chaired by the Former Lord Mayor, Alderman Michael Mainelli



- 24th November – Zoom MPR committee
- 27th November -Installation of Tim McNally as Master Glazier
- 28th November- Broad Street Civic Lunch
- 3rd December – Past Presidents’ meeting at Grocers Hall
- 3rd December – UWC Carol Service and Christmas Lunch



- 5th December - Guest at the White tie banquet of The Guild of Freemen of the City of London
- 8th December - Red Cross Market
- 12th December - White tie Royal Society of St George banquet
- 19th December - Guest at the London Sea Cadets Carol Service at the Chapel of the Old Royal Naval College Greenwich



Corinna and I attended the Sea Cadets Carol service at The Chapel of the Old Royal Naval College, supporting Commander James Nisbet, area commander, together with Captain Mary on 19th December, a lovely venue and nice to listen to the cadets reading the lessons so eloquently.

2026

- 7th January visit to the Central London Mosque –

Although I had been released from hospital the night before, I was not well enough to attend my last event under my theme of religious tolerance, the visit to the Central London Mosque, but the JVP, Stephen Willis, and my consort did attend; Corinna wrote a short review:

A small group gathered on Wednesday 7th January 2026 for a visit to The Central London Mosque as part of Chris Edge’s presidential programme focussing on celebrating our rich religious diversity. The tour started with a brief presentation by Mohamed Mezzi of the history of the mosque and its British architect. We then joined the prayers in the central prayer room, followed by a tour of the exhibition rooms on the history of Islam.

It was an educational and inspiring visit. Thanks go to Hannan Ali for organising the tour and for Emma Woods for event management. A select few then went onto Pizza Express for lunch.

Corinna Edge

President’s Consort and member of UWC.



- 15th January – Corinna and I visited Geoff Kaye, with a bottle of very nice champagne to celebrate his 90th birthday



- 26th January – Guild of Freeman Installation, supporting our own PP Stephen Osborne, who was installed as Master at Sadlers' Hall



- 3rd February –the Ward Clubs Members and friends' reception at the Cheesegrater

The United Wards Club hosted a reception at the Cheesegrater building, courtesy of Aon, for the City of London Ward Clubs. The event welcomed 90 attendees, reflecting the diversity of the Ward Clubs and the range of titles held by their leaders, including Presidents, Masters, and Chairmen.

The UWC President, Chris Edge, opened the event and highlighted the following points:

1. Alderman Michael Minelli described the City as a “three-legged stool,” supported by the Livery, the Corporation, and the Ward Clubs.
2. Mark Carney, former Governor of the Bank of England, observed that “middle powers must act together, because if we’re not at the table, we’re on the menu,” underscoring the important role of Ward Clubs.
3. The United Ward Club has been committed to strengthening collaboration among Ward Clubs, and this reception marked the largest gathering to date. The recent Guildhall catering debate further reinforced the need for continued cooperation.



Chris then introduced former Lord Mayor Alderman Michael Mainelli, who spoke insightfully about the purpose and value of the Ward Clubs. He was followed by an engaging presentation from former Sheriff Andrew Marsden.

Chris thanked Michael, Andrew and Aon and in particular Emma the organiser of the event. The event provided an excellent opportunity for members from across the City of London’s Ward Clubs to connect and network in a relaxed and informal setting.

- 16th March – AGM & Installation of Mary Hardy as my successor