

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GLASS SELLERS.

The Installation of the first Glass Seller Sheriff in 1812.

John Blades was the first Glass Seller to serve as Sheriff of London & Middlesex. He was a Glass Seller from Ludgate Hill who had joined the Company as a Freeman by Redemption on 28th June 1779. He became a Liveryman on March 20th 1783, joined the Court of Assistants on December 16th 1784, and became Renter Warden for 1787/8, Upper Warden for 1788/9, and Master in 1789/90. He also served a second term as Master in 1808/9. He was elected to become the Senior Sheriff, with Michael Hoy from the Ironmongers Company as the Junior Sheriff, for the year 1812/13.

The Court of the Glass Sellers met at the Antwerp Tavern in Threadneedle Street on Thursday 24th September 1812 to make all the necessary plans for the various installation ceremonies, and to embrace the opportunity of offering their testimony of respect and esteem for the public and private character of their Court member and Past Master John Blades.

At 11am on Monday September 28th, one of the City Marshals attended upon the Court at the Antwerp Tavern to regulate their procession to The City of London Tavern in Bishopsgate to meet the Sheriffs at Breakfast. All were dressed in their Livery gowns with the Clerk in his black silk gown. The procession was preceded by the Marshal with bearers carrying aloft two silk banners emblazoned with the Arms of both the Company and the Sheriff. They were accompanied by the Beadle Thomas Oliver wearing two sashes of blue and yellow fringed with gold edging. There followed the Clerk, Anthony Highmore, in a chariot by himself, then three coaches with the gentlemen of the Court, next the Prime Warden Thomas Stubbs with the Renter Warden Robert Elliott in a coach by themselves, and finally the Master John Goldham, in a chariot by himself. On arrival, the Clerks of both the Glass Sellers and Ironmongers introduced their members, and then the Sheriffs, their Chaplains, several Aldermen and both companies breakfasted together.

Afterwards, the procession reformed and was led by the colours of the two Livery companies with the Beadles with scarves and staves, and with a band of music, the Ironmongers taking priority. On arrival at Guildhall, the two companies formed lines from the entrance to the steps to pay their respects to The Lord Mayor Claudius Stephen Hunter, the Court of Aldermen and the late Sheriffs who took their seats at 2pm. The Common Cryer made the proclamation and the new Sheriffs took the usual oath of office and their oaths of supremacy and allegiance, and both signed the Great Book. They were then clothed in their mazarine gowns and their gold chains were put upon them by the Sword Bearer. They then took their seats on either side of the Court of Aldermen. The whole procession as before then moved forward to Justice Hall in the Old Bailey, where the new Sheriffs met the previous Sheriffs to receive the transfer of all accounts, prisoners, effects, etc. During this time, the two Companies were shown into the Lord Mayor's Parlour. Afterwards, the whole procession returned in the same order to the City of London Tavern where a sumptuous Dinner was provided by the Sheriffs.

Two days later, on Wednesday 30th September 1812, the Livery reassembled at the Antwerp Tavern and again proceeded to the City of London Tavern for breakfast with the new Sheriffs and the Ironmongers at 12 noon. At 1pm the whole procession moved forward to Guildhall, this time with the Glass Sellers leading. The procession passed the entrance to Guildhall where they were joined by the Lord Mayor, Court of Aldermen, City Officers in State, and all then proceeded to Blackfriars Bridge. The two Companies embarked for Westminster in the Fishmongers Barge, which had been borrowed for the occasion. The Lord Mayor was in the City Barge, preceded by the Water Bailiff in his boat. The Companies Barge effected the first arrival that they might be ready to receive the Lord Mayor.

At Westminster, the procession reformed as before and moved to the Court of Exchequer. Once there, the Glass Sellers lined on the right hand side from the Bar to the steps of the Court, with the

Ironmongers on the other side. The Lord Mayor, together with the Recorder John Silvester at his right hand, and with the Sword and Mace Bearers who inverted their respective insignia, was followed by the Aldermen as he approached the Bar. The former Sheriffs with their Under Sheriffs were sitting within the Bar, and the Cursitor Baron of the Court of Exchequer Francis Maseres Esq had taken his seat on the Bench. The Recorder then introduced the new Sheriffs to the Court in terms appropriate to their high character of opulence, loyalty and integrity, and the Court, having recorded their appearance, the Cursitor Baron administered the usual oaths to the late Sheriffs and officers. The Cryer then called upon the City of London to do suit and service to the King for the premises which they held as tenants and occupiers of a piece of waste ground called "The Moors" in the County of Salop. The Senior Alderman, having assented, took a small hatchet with which he chopped a stick in twain upon the table. Afterwards he took a Bill hook with which he likewise chopped another stick in twain. The Cryer then similarly called upon the City of London to do suit and service to the King as tenants and occupiers of a tenement called "The Forge" held In Capite in the parish of St. Clement Danes, Middlesex. The horse shoes and bag of hob nails lying on the table were then counted and recorded. (There appear to have been 6 horse shoes and 61 hob nails. After the count, the Remembrancer would state "Good Number".) The Lord Mayor then retired backwards, bowing twice to the Court, and the Cursitor Baron then withdrew.

The Glass Sellers and Ironmongers then returned to their Barge followed by the City Officers as before. At Blackfriars, the procession reformed and proceeded to the City of London Tavern for a sumptuous Entertainment. The Lord Mayor presided at the upper table with the Court of Aldermen and the City Council and officers, while the Junior Sheriff took the right hand table, the Senior Sheriff the left hand table, and there was a central table for their other friends. This closed the inauguration of the new Sheriffs. More hospitality and splendour, more urbanity, more munificence, more elegance and profusion of meats and wines, nor more good order mingled with festivity never before graced these ceremonies in the City of London.

John Blades continued to support the Glass Sellers Company. On 27th September 1821 he made a munificent donation of 200 Guineas to more than double the Trust Fund set up by the Will of the late James Hayes who had died earlier that same year. John Blades went on to serve the Company a third time as Master for the year 1824/5. He also became the Father of the Glass Sellers Company. He died on 10th November 1829, just 50 years after he had joined as a Freeman. The Court received the news of his death with feelings of profound sorrow, and recorded their deepest expressions of regret at the loss of a gentleman whom they were proud to have numbered as one of their members.
