



Looking at . . .
The Worshipful Company of
Spectacle Makers





WCSM is ranked 60th in the order of precedence of Livery Companies in the City of London



Events range from formal dinners to weekends away, in the UK and further afield

A City Livery Company

The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM) was founded by Royal Charter in 1629. We are a City of London livery company.

There are over a hundred of these companies, each representing a trade, craft or profession. The oldest livery company was established in 1394 and companies are still being formed today. The total number of liverymen across all the companies is now over 40,000 and their membership is spread both nationwide and abroad.

Originally, each company took on the regulation of their individual trade or industry. They set standards and rates of pay, controlled the admission and training of apprentices, and disciplined those who infringed their regulations. Today, each livery company has its own unique way of working and they vary in size, structure and interests but they share the same ethos: supporting trade, education, charity and fellowship. The charitable dimension of livery companies' activities now amounts to over £40m each year.

The Spectacle Makers have a long heritage but members of the Company still share the same purpose as their 17th Century founders: to help treat, and prevent, visual impairment. Members have played a significant role in the development of vision science and the Company itself was a

major driving force in the creation of most of today's optical and ophthalmic regulatory and representative bodies.

What does WCSM do?

WCSM plays an important role within the strong fraternity of optics.

The Company conducted the qualifying examinations for optometrists and dispensing opticians until the formation of the College of Optometrists in 1980, and the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) in 1986. Since then the Company has focused on encouraging the qualification of non-regulated staff working in optics, particularly optical technicians and optical practice support staff. WCSM examinations and assessments are directly relevant to work in optical practices and laboratories. In 2000, the Company became an approved Awarding Body and our qualifications continue to be nationally accredited and well recognised within the optical world.

The Company encourages research in the visual sciences by awarding medals each year, and sponsors periodic lectures and discussions.

Company events range from the very grand to the very informal. The Company operates from Apothecaries' Hall, located on an ancient cobbled street in the City. Quarterly lunches take place in the Hall itself, which was rebuilt in



Liverymen who are leaders in their field discuss developments in treating visual impairment



Members enjoy a drink before lunch in the historic courtyard at Apothecaries' Hall

1670, just after the Great Fire of London. The annual Livery Dinner is held in one of the larger Livery Halls in the City, some of which are not generally open to the public.

The Spectacle Makers' Society, in contrast, offers friendship and fellowship for Freeman and Liverymen alike, through an informal programme of social events and visits in different locations around the country and, occasionally, abroad.

Members

WCSM has around 1,100 members. The Company embraces all of those involved in improving vision including ophthalmic surgeons, optometrists, optical assistants and suppliers of the latest optometric equipment. Members come from the fields of dispensing optics, optometry, ophthalmology, manufacturing optics, university departments of vision sciences and research establishments. Many of the leaders of national optical industry bodies are members of the Livery and we have members based internationally too.

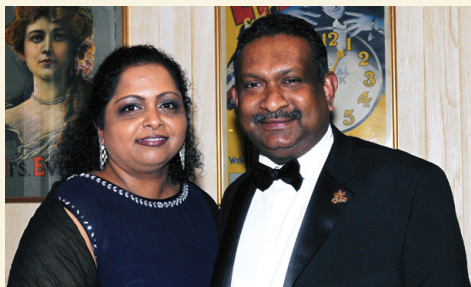
You do not have to be working within the world of optics to join the Company. Up to 25 per cent of the members of the Company come from other professions or occupations. The Clerk encourages applications for membership and questions from anyone who may be interested in joining. Call 020 7236 2932 or email clerk@spectaclemakers.com



Our craft is as relevant now as it was in 1629: a Liveryman explains contact lenses to schoolchildren



All Freeman and Liverymen are members of The Spectacle Makers' Society which organises social events throughout the year



WCSM has a reputation for friendliness and welcomes members from both optical and non-optical professions



Ophthalmic nurses at the University in Maseru, Lesotho celebrate passing their course, funded by The Spectacle Makers' Charity

The Spectacle Makers' Charity

The Spectacle Makers' Charity (registered no. 1072172) is an enabling charity, primarily making grants to other charities who are working to improve the quality of life for the visually impaired, both at home and overseas. Before agreeing a grant, the trustees satisfy themselves that the money will be well spent, and they always ask for a report back from the recipient. The Charitable Fund is growing, allowing the Trustees to support projects both in the UK and in countries where eyecare is in a much earlier stage of development. Members of the Company are encouraged to support the charitable programme through their time with the Company, and many remember the Charity in their wills.

Joining the Company

Members of the College of Optometrists, the Association of British Dispensing Opticians, the Royal College of Ophthalmologists or the British Orthoptic Society and those who have passed the Company's examinations for Optical Practice Support Staff and Optical Technicians at the required level can apply to join the Company as of right.

It is also possible to join the Company by right of patrimony, if one of your parents was a Liveryman of the Company at the date of your birth. Other applicants are welcomed - the only requirement being that their application must be proposed and seconded by two Liverymen of the Company.



In the UK, a Visual Impairment Adviser supported by our Charity helps students improve their quality of life

The admissions process follows the historic rules set by the Company's 17th Century Charter and Book of Ordinances. New members join as Freeman, moving up to the Livery if they wish and as vacancies arise over time. Those who wish to become a Liveryman must not only be a Freeman of the Company, but also a Freeman of the City of London. Liverymen are encouraged to play a full part not only in the life of the Company but also in the ceremonial life of the City of London, as they are entitled to vote for the election of the City's two Sheriffs and the Lord Mayor.

The Clerk is always happy to explain the process and provide more information about the Company and how you might enjoy being part of a Livery Company - including the chance to take up new opportunities, enjoy new experiences and establish professional connections and new, often long lasting, friendships.

Contact:

clerk@spectaclemakers.com
or call 020 7236 2932

The Clerk

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