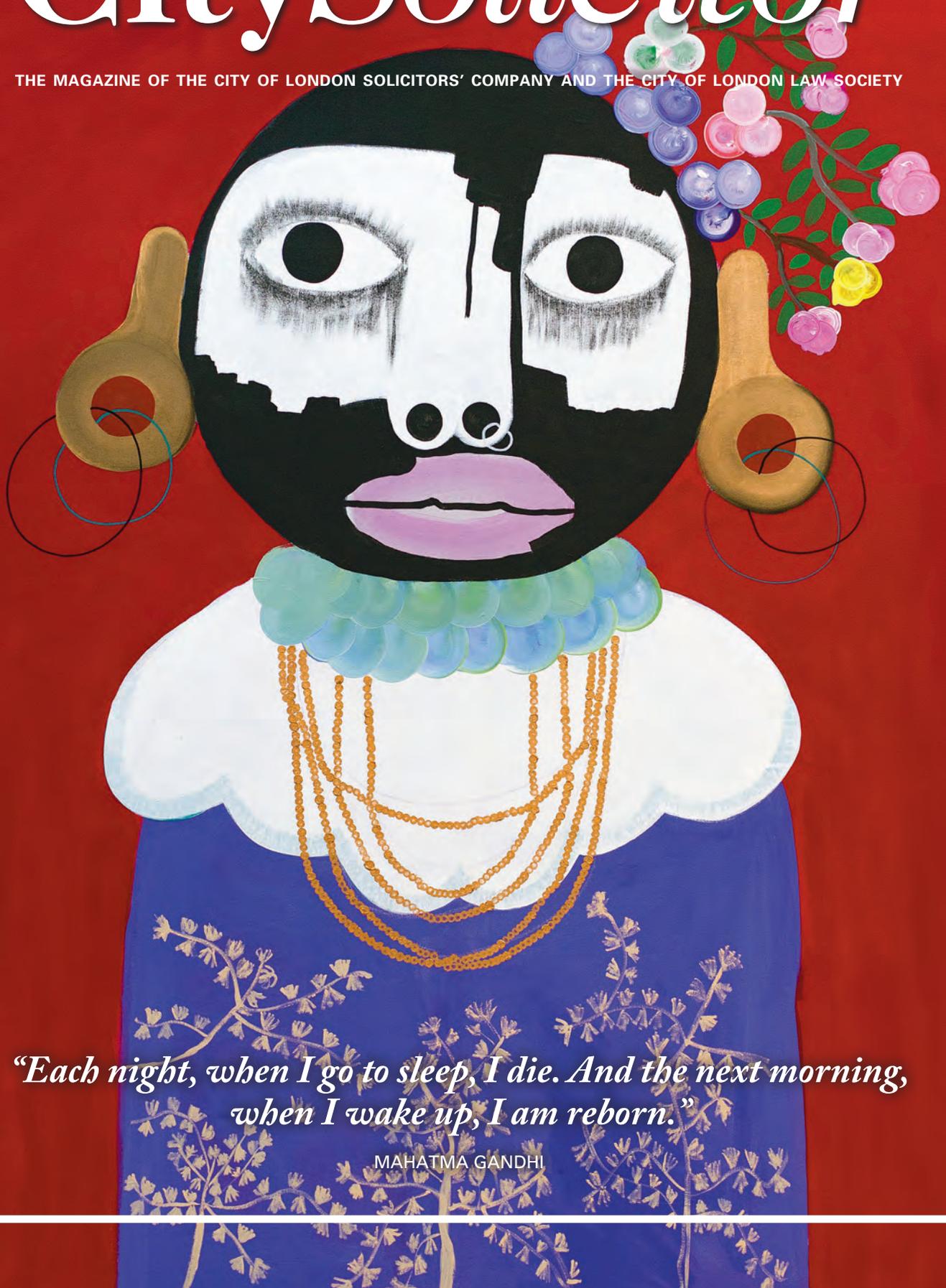


# CitySolicitor

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CITY OF LONDON SOLICITORS' COMPANY AND THE CITY OF LONDON LAW SOCIETY



*“Each night, when I go to sleep, I die. And the next morning, when I wake up, I am reborn.”*

MAHATMA GANDHI

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## ALL CHANGE (IN WITH THE NEW)



### 7 ALL CHANGE (IN WITH THE NEW)

As a new Lord Mayor of the City of London and a new Sheriff are appointed, we speak to the two new appointees about their journey to this point and what they hope to achieve in office.

### 8 ANYTHING – AND EVERYTHING – IS POSSIBLE

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### 10 SHERIFF. LAWYER. MAGISTRATE. HISTORIAN. AUTHOR. (AKA SUPERWOMAN)

Alison Gowman is raising the bar. A driven achiever, her latest challenge is the role of Sheriff.



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### 12 WORDS ARE CHEAP. IT'S TIME TO PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

There has been a shout out to City Law firms to contribute to a fund intended to remove the barriers of entry into the profession and to extend access to the Law for those who need it most. A no brainer. So why hasn't everyone participated?



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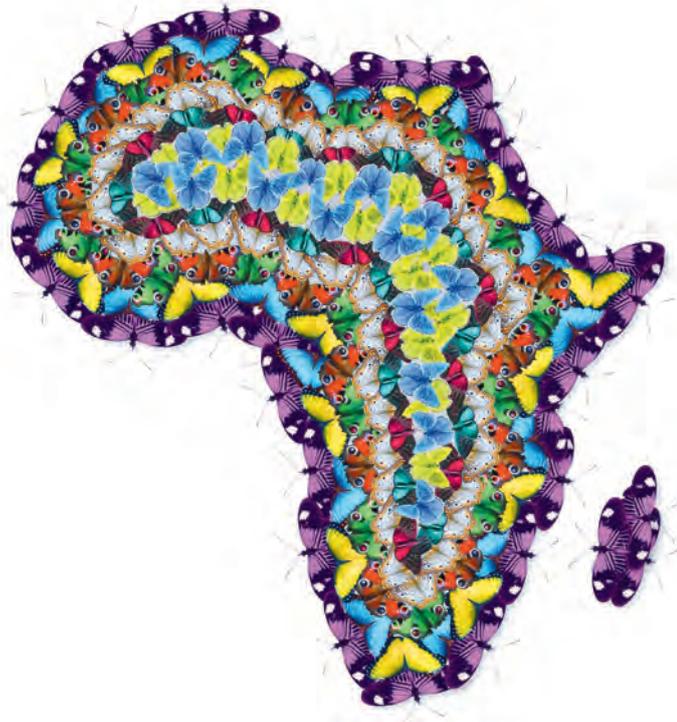
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African culture is taking London by storm right now. We looked at two of its rising stars; AKOKO restaurant and artist, Kojo Marfo.



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Kojo Marfo is the name everyone involved in the art world is talking about right now. We look at his art – and the story of the man behind it.



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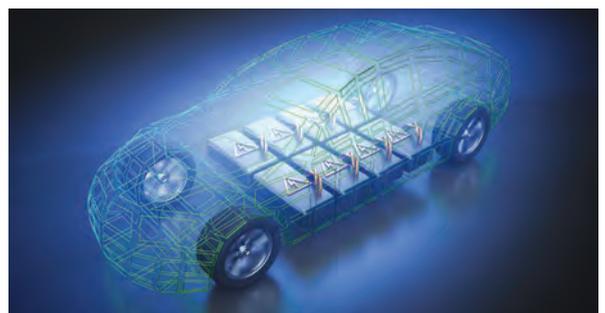
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*No matter what happens, it invariably passes and life continues, albeit in a new and different way.*

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## AS WE DRAW TO THE CLOSE OF ANOTHER YEAR, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT WE THINK FORWARD TO A BLANK PAGE, A FRESH START, A NEW BEGINNING ONCE MORE.

The whole concept of rebirth is something that is intrinsic to every aspect of our lives and our world; every single day the sun rises afresh. No matter what happens, it invariably passes and life continues, albeit in a new and different way. The last 20 months have shown us that so clearly. Coronavirus attacked the very essence of us all but, as a world, we have learned to adapt and rethink.

In honour of this resilience and capability to evolve, we have dedicated this issue to the subject of renaissance and examined new beginnings in our City and our profession as well as in the rest of the world.

I hope as ever you find our articles stimulating, informative, provocative and challenging.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you all – and your families and loved ones – health and happiness over the holidays and may 2022 bring joyful new chapters for us all to experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Henson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Philip Henson**

Editor

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# ALL CHANGE (IN WITH THE NEW)

As Vincent Keaveny and Alison Gowman commence their new roles as Lord Mayor of the City of London and Sheriff respectively, CitySolicitor was privileged to have the opportunity to speak with them both, to find out about the journeys that brought them to where they are today and to hear their ambitions for the year they are in office.

A portrait of Vincent Keaveny, the new Lord Mayor of the City of London. He is a middle-aged man with dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a dark blue pinstriped suit jacket over a blue shirt and a colorful, patterned tie. A large, ornate gold and blue badge is pinned to his lapel. The background is a blurred indoor setting with light-colored walls and a plant.

# ANYTHING – AND EVERYTHING – IS POSSIBLE

*Vincent Keaveny is the new Lord Mayor of the City of London, something which he says he would never have thought of as being even possible had you suggested it to him when he first qualified as a solicitor.*



Keaveny grew up and went to college in Dublin and first came to London in 1989 working as an in-house lawyer. His initial plan was only to stay in London for a couple of years, to get some City experience and then to return home to Dublin to practise at the Commercial Bar but he says he found London just too exciting a place to leave. Fortunately for Keaveny, the rules changed in the early nineties so he requalified as a solicitor and has been in private practice in London ever since, currently a partner at DLA Piper LLP.

Keaveny says that when he began working in the City, he was only vaguely aware of the Corporation, of the Livery Company, of the office of the Lord Mayor, but it was only in the early 2000s when he was a partner at Norton Rose LLP that he began to get more involved himself.

How this came about was, bizarrely, through lunch. Norton Rose had regular partners' lunches and Keaveny always sat next to his friend, Brian Greenwood who was about to become a senior warden of the Solicitors' Livery Company. Greenwood persuaded Keaveny to join – and so the journey began.

Keaveny thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the Livery Company and says it is a great first step into an engagement with the Civic City. A few years later, Keaveny was invited to join the Court of the Company and he says that, at that point, his ambition was to become Master of the Solicitors' Livery Company, something he achieved in 2014. He had already become an Alderman in 2013 and from there he became Sheriff in 2018 and now is the 693rd Lord Mayor of the City of London – a long way from someone who thought he would only spend a short time in London. Keaveny speaks of his journey as "extraordinary" and his passion for London shines through; he says he is not planning on going anywhere else, any time soon.

"The role of the Lord Mayor is a phenomenal one. There is so much history attached to it. And ceremony too; although the ceremony only constitutes about 5% of the work involved.

Because the role is only a year, the planning and preparation before the year begins are vital so as to make the best use and create the maximum impact in the 12 months themselves."

The principal role of the Lord Mayor these days is as ambassador for the UK financial,

technology, professional and related business services. Keaveny can expect to spend around a hundred days travelling on the road promoting these services as well as inbound with visitors and delegations whether it be ministers of finance, business leaders or governors of banks. Keaveny believes that the office of the Lord Mayor has the ability to convene people in a way that few other roles have, partly because it is not a political role but also because of the prestige of the financial sector that it represents.

Keaveny has a big agenda to handle. On top of the normal business there is the fallout of the pandemic to deal with; the City reopening, looking at more flexible ways of working; challenges and opportunities all coming together at the same time. The post Brexit landscape is now more in focus too.

Every Lord Mayor has a theme that frames his time in office and Keaveny's is "People and Purpose; investing in a better tomorrow". He sees "Purpose" as specifically related to the S in the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda and believes where the focus has hitherto primarily been on E, the lens is now widening to the S.

"The "People and Purpose" theme has been on my mind for the past three years since the appraisal process for Lord Mayor began. It has evolved with the challenges we now face post pandemic and I think the S of ESG will be right at the fore of boardroom agendas"

Because of the demands of the office, which Keaveny sees as a 150% commitment, it is impossible for him to continue his work as a practising solicitor in the next year, in effect having a year's sabbatical.

Part of being Lord Mayor means living in Mansion House – it becomes the Mayor's home, his place of work and his centre for entertaining. Keaveny sees this as an opportunity and privilege to step out of normal life for a moment in time and be able to live in an 18th century palace in the middle of all the activity. Along with Mr and Mrs Keaveny, their black labrador, India, will also be living at Mansion House.

When asked what is the one thing Keaveny would most like to achieve in his year, he says it is impossible to pick just one as the role is so multi-faceted but states that it is important for him to try and be involved in getting a sense of normality, post pandemic, back on the

City streets. On the "Purpose" side, he hopes to make progress on finance for social impact to which there are some significant barriers at the moment which he is working to overcome. And on the "People" element, there is a big focus on social mobility. Keaveny will be co-chairing a Task Force which the Government has asked the City of London to set up and he hopes this will have a legacy element. Lastly, as an Irishman he hopes that despite political differences, the positive relationship between the UK and Ireland will be reinforced.

"London is a city where anything and everything is possible. My story is an example of that. Who would have thought London would have an Irish Lord Mayor? Whilst I am an Irishman through and through, London trumps everything. I am a Londoner first and foremost."

*"London is a city where anything and everything is possible. My story is an example of that."*



A portrait of Alison Gowman, a woman with short brown hair, wearing glasses, a dark blue textured sweater, a pearl necklace, and pearl earrings. She is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera.

**SHERIFF. LAWYER.  
MAGISTRATE.  
HISTORIAN. AUTHOR.  
(AKA SUPERWOMAN)**

*Reading Alison Gowman's CV is somewhat intimidating. There is not much this lady has not achieved and she is still brimming over with purpose and ambition.*



Like Keaveny, Gowman has been a partner at DLA Piper LLP for 30 years, and is now a consultant (a double win for this firm this year), a place she has worked at since she was an articulated clerk. Gowman has seen the firm go through many iterations; mergers, changes of name; but she has remained a constant.

Gowman speaks of her background; unlike many lawyers entering the profession when she did (1978), she went to grammar school rather than public school. She had no connections and simply applied for a training contract, which she got. She was the first woman to make partner in the firm in 1985. Gowman feels strongly about social mobility, about diversity, about inclusivity. Although she believes London is a city that is "open to all", nonetheless she says it could still go further in tackling inequalities and feels strongly that "we should speak up when we see discrimination in any form".

Gowman first became interested in the Corporation when, as a partner at DLA Piper LLP, she discovered that entitled her to voting rights. There is a business vote for the City of London Corporation which is the local authority for the Square Mile and businesses – including law firms – have these rights. Gowman says that if you work in the City you very quickly find that there is an ease of access to many things through getting involved in the Corporation. Once piqued, her curiosity led her to find out as much as she could about the Corporation and when, in 1991, there was a vacancy she decided to stand for election. She was a Councillor for 11 years and then was elected as an Alderman in 2002. As well as continuing to be involved in the work she did as a Councillor in areas of schools, health, roads, planning, finance etc, as an Alderman there is the extra role of working closely with the Lord Mayor and being an ambassador for the civic City and this is more of an external role.

Gowman was only the 2nd woman to become an Alderman. Two in 800 years. Quite a staggering statistic. As with her entry into the legal profession, when Gowman decided to join the Corporation, she similarly knew no one, but just "decided to get stuck in". There were very few women in the Corporation at the time. From there, Gowman wanted to be a Sheriff – which she has now achieved.

Her plan is to work closely with Keaveny in promoting that the City is now open again and is working hard to get its physical entity reignited into action. Gowman believes that professional services, transitioned quite

easily to home and online working but for smaller businesses like hairdressers, dry cleaners, coffee shops etc the impact the pandemic had on them was huge and she wants to work to find ways to help them survive and come back and flourish. Gowman is a real estate lawyer and she says that prices have remained relatively stable and that investors are still deploying funds into the City but she also sees how property has been affected as a result of COVID. There are, as a consequence, a lot of empty commercial premises and thought needs to be given as to how to reoccupy these sites and whether a shift away from their typical commercial use might benefit. Life Sciences is a sector which is growing and could increasingly move more into the City. Also cultural institutions are looking at the City as an area of importance. She believes "the City needs to be broad-minded and to embrace this shift from the more typical legal and finance companies that to date have totally dominated the Square Mile and grasp these exciting new opportunities to change and flourish".

Gowman has had a big long-term engagement with sustainability and environmental matters. This is something that crosses over with her work as a property lawyer. 40% of emissions in greenhouse gases come from property so there needs to be consideration as to how we can "green" this and find more sustainable ways of living and working. She says the City can show how we can pave the way for this transition through funding through Capital Markets and private funding, not just in the City and the UK but internationally. The City is so well placed with the plethora of professionals like engineers, lawyers, financiers etc all of whom can come together to achieve this.

Since the 7th Century, the Sheriffs of the City have nominally been in charge of the Criminal Justice System so they are required to actually live in the Old Bailey while holding the post. Unfortunately for Gowman, the living quarters are currently going through huge renovation and refurbishment works so she will be staying in her own home whilst in office. This is just a stone's throw away from the Old Bailey, in the Barbican, so she can easily walk to work and the Old Bailey will be also used for entertaining purposes. Part of the role of a Sheriff is to support the judges, something Gowman is perfectly equipped to do as not only is she a lawyer, but a practising magistrate too.

Gowman wants to promote the story of the City of London across the UK;



Alison as Sheriff at the Lord Mayor Election.

particularly in other financial hubs like Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham.

Gowman's "theme" for her year in office is the three Ps – Property, Purposed Financing (Green and social impact investment) and Philanthropy. Of the latter she says this needs to be properly focussed on the areas with the most need. Gowman has spent the last eight years as Chair and Deputy-Chair of the City's charitable fund, the City Bridge Trust, which is the seventh largest charitable endowment in the UK so she understands the need for proper monitoring and evaluation as to where the monies go to ensure it is not just the most fashionable but also the more hidden ones who benefit.

Gowman would like her legacy to be in terms of linking people up – she wants to link up the different networks so that they are part of a bigger community and all work to help each other. She believes currently there is not sufficient understanding of what different sectors do; from livery companies to businesses to the Old Bailey and everything in between. Gowman wants this linking in and belonging to engender a feeling of working together for the greater good; just as the pandemic brought a community spirit of engagement, she would like to replicate this in the City.

Like Keaveny, Gowman is obsessed with London; walking around, discovering its history, enjoying its culture like theatre and opera.

She has also written a book "*The City of London: who, what, why?*" which can be purchased by emailing; [alison.gowman@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:alison.gowman@cityoflondon.gov.uk) for £10 plus postage or can be collected from her office at the Old Bailey.

# WORDS ARE CHEAP



## IT'S TIME TO PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

Every law firm speaks eloquently – even passionately –  
about social mobility, diversity, inclusivity.

But the jury is out as to how much we are actually **DOING**  
rather than simply talking.

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How solicitors qualify is changing; as of September this year both the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) and the Legal Practice Course (LPC) have been replaced by the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE). Now trainees can take their course and assessments in a more part time way and a formal training contract with one law firm is no longer essential. Whilst these factors undoubtedly are helping a wider group to be able to consider entering the profession, it is still really tough for many. The financial burden that comes with training to be a solicitor then restricts many from, perhaps, practicing in areas of the law that are less lucrative.

Take Social Welfare Law. This is still a massively underfunded sector and one which struggles to attract and keep lawyers – even though this is an area a lot of law students are particularly drawn to.

Siobhan Taylor-Ward is a Social Welfare lawyer. She works at the Merseyside Law Centre and is also on the Committee of Young Legal Aid Lawyers. Siobhan is heavily involved in the area of social mobility within the legal profession. She was on the steering committee for the new SQE. Whilst City law firms have always been very well represented at such steering committees, Siobhan was often a lone voice from her sector. She says there are no Social Welfare modules in the SQE so it is not even considered a part of the training so this makes it hard for future lawyers to seriously consider it as their future career. Whilst the SQE seems (or looks) cheaper than the LPC was, it is still out of reach financially for a huge

number of people. Siobhan herself qualified two years ago, having already had six years' experience as a paralegal or case worker, and now earns £30,000 a year. She works crazy hours doing ridiculous amounts of unpaid overtime trying to support herself and her children and repay all the debts she built up trying to qualify. She can't even look forward to being properly compensated down the line as her managers only earn around £36,000 outside of London and around £40,000 inside London – so in choosing this area of the law to work in, Siobhan has effectively committed herself to a life of hardship in comparison with City solicitors. The combination of the cost of training then coupled with low earnings puts off so many young lawyers from being in the Social Welfare sector – which explains why they are crying out for more. In a profession that is built on the premise of justice for all, this feels very unjust – both for the people needing Social Welfare lawyers and for the lawyers themselves. Siobhan says that so many university students and those working in law clinics are really interested in human rights.

*“The combination of the cost of training then coupled with low earnings puts off so many young lawyers from being in the Social Welfare sector.”*

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“It’s powerful, exciting and so rewarding to know that the work you do is making a genuine, positive difference – but that doesn’t put bread and butter on the table. If you come from a working class background, if you haven’t got parents who can share the financial burden – it is terrifying. People are too scared to stay in the sector.”

Whilst raising all these issues at different forums, Patrick McCann (Global Head of Learning at Linklaters LLP, and also the Chair of the City of London Law Society Training Committee) heard Siobhan’s plea for help. Together – and working with Victoria Cromwell (Senior Director of Business Development at BARBRI, who are the global leaders in legal education providers) they came up with a brilliant plan to help young lawyers qualify and be able to work in the Social Welfare sector without the horror of debt hanging over them; a scheme that would not only benefit these lawyers themselves but by enabling them to work in the sector, would also help all those who needed their help. This scheme “The Social Welfare Solicitor Qualification Fund (SWSQF) – City Law for Social Welfare” is an initiative that seeks City law firm funding to pay for the training of young lawyers who want to work in the Social Welfare sector. The scheme is run in conjunction with BARBRI.

*“What we are trying to do is get the big City law firms to put their hands in their pockets.”*

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Patrick says

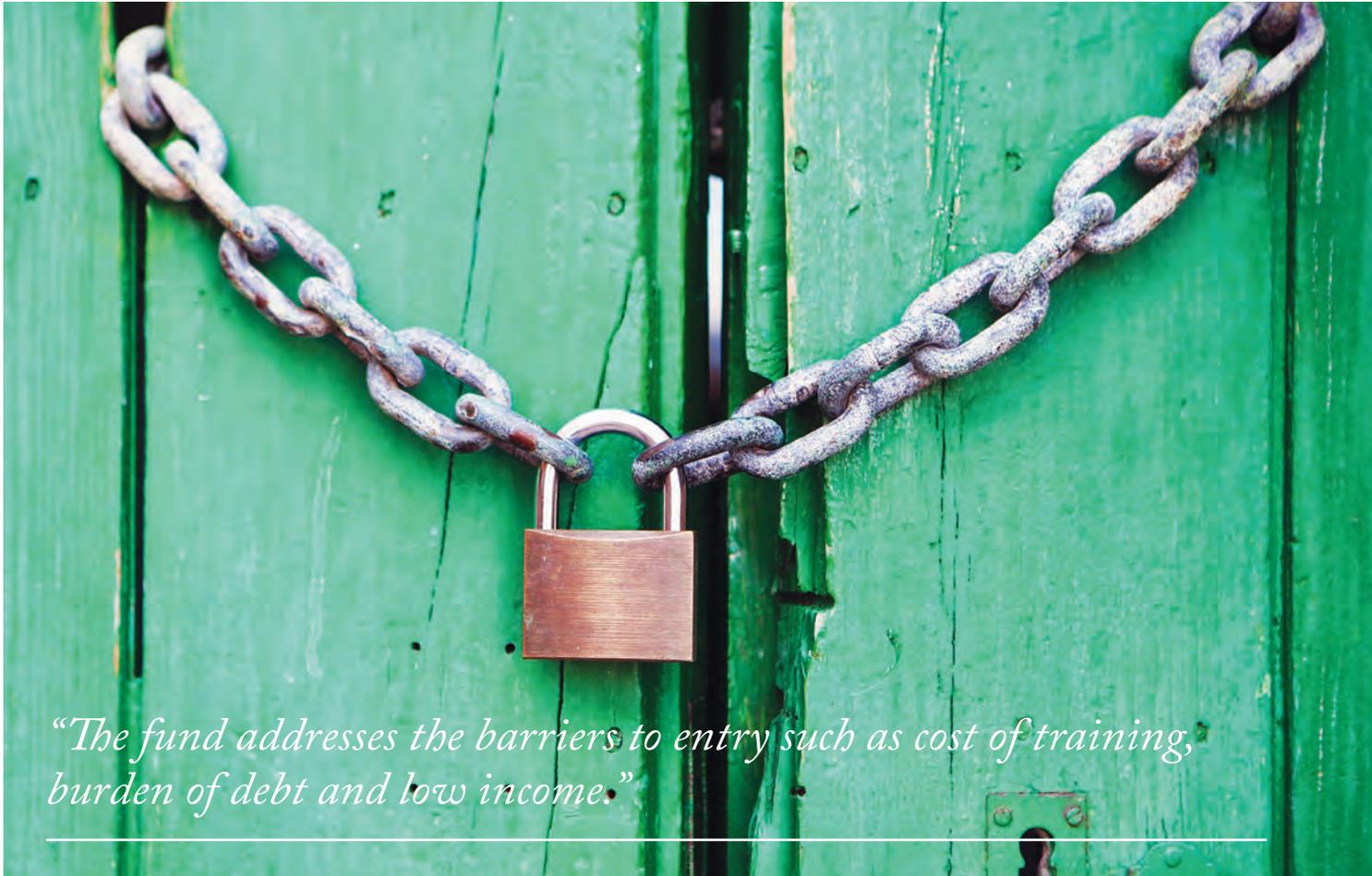
“There are a bunch of unqualified people working hours in social welfare, giving advice, and being paid a pittance. There is no way they can afford to go through the programme to qualify – but they could do even more effective work if they were actually qualified solicitors. What we are trying to do is get the big City law firms to put their hands in their pockets to support this. £10,000 is enough for someone to qualify. We think there are 200 people out there we can turn into high achieving qualified lawyers. Our first target was £100,000 – which we have achieved. But we still have a long way to go.”

The Social Welfare Solicitor Qualification Fund (SWSQF) proposal is:

- An initiative by City of London Law Society (CLLS)
- To provide greater access to justice for those in need
- By creating social welfare solicitors
- Whereby CLLS, supported by BARBRI, obtain and provide funding
- For the SQE preparatory course and assessment fees to aspiring solicitors
- Each qualified lawyer then delivers approx. 1,500 social welfare law hours annually
- This fund works alongside other CLLS aspirations to provide greater access to justice and widen access to the legal profession
- The scheme is scalable according to supply, demand, financing

This fund is urgently needed to help the vulnerable get the legal representation and assistance that they need and to provide lawyers for the underfunded and undermanned sector of social welfare. The fund addresses the barriers to entry such as cost of training, burden of debt and low income. Cuts to legal aid in 2012/13 mean that access to justice has been severely affected. There are legal aid desserts right across the UK. The scheme is aimed at those already working in social welfare. It gives the opportunity to those with proven experience such as paralegals and case workers to become the social welfare law solicitors of the future and to ensure the sustainability of the sector.

Victoria Cromwell is also a committee member for this innovative scheme. She believes that the SQE is a great step forward in widening access to entry as it is more affordable than the LPC which it replaces. However, it still is not feasible for many. This fund starts to fill in those gaps. The committee also intend to put in some sort of social welfare module for these candidates to help them with their future work. Victoria first worked with Patrick McCann and Linklaters LLP to train overseas-qualified lawyers; BARBRI’s partnership with Linklaters LLP enabled them to help re-train refugee lawyers through a charity called Breaking Barriers. Patrick and Victoria wanted to extend this offering beyond Linklaters to a bigger audience; hence SWSQF.



*“The fund addresses the barriers to entry such as cost of training, burden of debt and low income.”*

“Social welfare case workers are prohibited from accessing the profession. This does not seem equitable or right. It’s a good thing for the profession to retain this talent.”

The aim is to get to 20 fully funded places; to achieve this £200,000 is needed. The fund is asking City law firms to donate £10,000 each.

Whilst £10,000 is a huge amount of money for the people we are talking about if we are really truthful we know it is a drop in the ocean for most law firms. It really is a no brainer that the City should just do this. It gives access to justice and there is the social mobility angle too.

Many City law firms are doing amazing work in the social welfare sector already – through the Collaborative Plan and in other financial and time donations – but this initiative is a new, very effective way made possible by the SQE’s introduction to create solicitors committed to working in the social welfare sector.

One firm that was very quick to participate – in fact they were the first – are Trowers & Hamblins LLP. Sara Bailey is a senior partner with the firm and has been there since she joined as a trainee over 30 years ago. Social mobility is a subject close to her heart, particularly as she didn’t enter the profession via the

classic route. She was the first generation in her family to go to university and has always felt the law has many unseen barriers and could do more to encourage people to come into the profession. She says her key target as a senior partner is to really pursue the target of diversity and pursue avenues to help people access the profession. To her the scheme really was a no brainer.

“We are really pleased to be an early adopter of this programme, I see it as being unique in its proposition to convert social welfare workers into highly effective solicitors and have been so impressed to see forward-thinking, socially minded City law firms come on board. Together, City law firms can begin to make a real difference to such an important part of the legal services sector which continues to be under such funding pressures. This is social mobility in action, which is something we as a firm are extremely passionate about.”

Beth Carter is the Diversity Communications Manager at White & Case LLP, another early adopter firm. White & Case have five spotlight areas that they are keen to improve on in representation within the profession. These are race and ethnicity, gender, disability, social mobility and LGBT+. They have a dedicated task force for social mobility within the UK, which partners and staff committed to making the firm a more inclusive place to work can join.

*“When this opportunity came up it seemed the perfect way for us to provide a way to improve social mobility at a more senior level within the profession.”*

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“When this opportunity came up it seemed the perfect way for us to provide a way to improve social mobility at a more senior level within the profession; a lot of the work we do is with school students to show what working in a law firm really entails, but this is something that could help those qualifying to get entry into firms – and even create contacts in the profession.”

Beth says if you are really committed to diversity then you need to be giving it both money and people. Talking is not enough.

Beth is the first person in her family to finish High School in Australia, where she was brought up. She had always been told she would make a good lawyer and this stuck with her. She got a scholarship to go to university but she struggled because she had no contacts to get either internships or jobs. She eventually got a job as a paralegal in a small family law chambers that represented children who had been removed by the state because of abuse – similar work to that which is highlighted in this scheme. For Beth this afforded an opportunity of “paying it forward”.

David Boyd is Head of Pro Bono at Clifford Chance LLP. Like both Sara and Beth, David was quick to jump at the opportunity to participate in the Fund and Clifford Chance are signed up contributors.

“Since the legal aid cuts, it has become increasingly important for commercial firms doing pro bono work to strategically target the work they are doing. Without the relevant expertise, it’s incredibly difficult

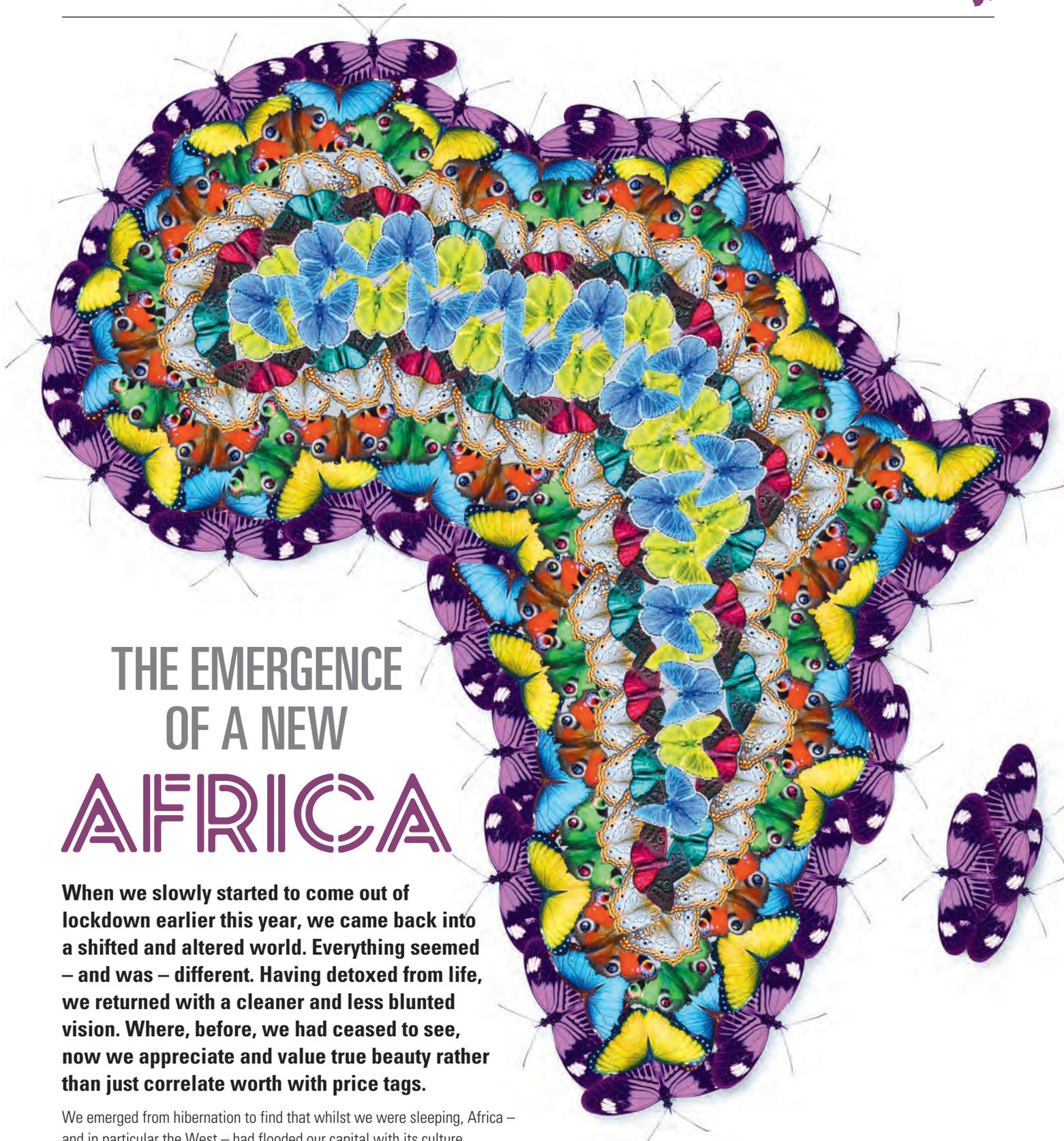
to move the dial in terms of providing help to those who most need it, and COVID has further exacerbated the difficulties people in need are facing. While commercial law firms cannot directly fill the provision gap in social welfare law, collaborative funds like the SWSQF go some way in improving capacity and we’re glad to be a part of the initiative.”

The City of London Solicitors’ Company is also offering support with a grant from its Charitable Fund for the first year of the project and hopes to continue its support for future years. Having reviewed the initiative, the Charities Committee welcomed the opportunity to contribute to a longer-term project which would recognise the Company’s commitment to access to justice and also to support a sector of the profession in desperate need of resources and funding.

**The feeling that this concept is a no brainer repeatedly came up. It is a no brainer. Has your firm contributed yet? If not then start changing that today and be a part of the collaborative and collective approach that is needed to break down barriers of entry into the profession and to widen the access to justice for those who most need it. After all, is this not the very premise of the law, that it is indeed about fairness and justice for all.**

*If you’d like to find out more, please contact [patrick.mccann@linklaters.com](mailto:patrick.mccann@linklaters.com) or [liz.thomas@citysolicitors.org.uk](mailto:liz.thomas@citysolicitors.org.uk)*





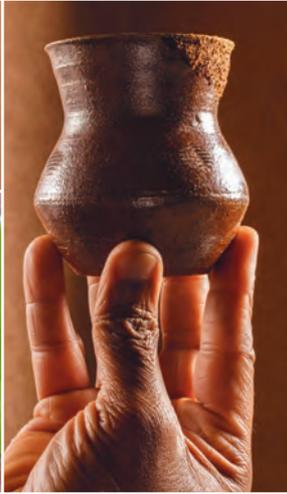
# THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW AFRICA

**When we slowly started to come out of lockdown earlier this year, we came back into a shifted and altered world. Everything seemed – and was – different. Having detoxed from life, we returned with a cleaner and less blunted vision. Where, before, we had ceased to see, now we appreciate and value true beauty rather than just correlate worth with price tags.**

We emerged from hibernation to find that whilst we were sleeping, Africa – and in particular the West – had flooded our capital with its culture. Every gallery was full of African art; Michael Armitage at the RA, Zanele Muholé at Tate Modern, Lynette Yiadom Boakye at Tate Britain; even the Summer exhibition had a very pronounced African theme. African food has become the new fashionable flavour and in fashion African designers are at the forefront of trend. Africa's vibrancy, its brightness, its colours, its

power, its simplicity, its stories – all of these wonderful treasures are precisely what we need after the flat and grey nature of COVID life.

To celebrate this exciting new emergence of African culture, CitySolicitor visited the incredible AKOKO restaurant and also talked to the phenomenal African artist, Kojo Marfo – both taking London by storm.



# A VERITABLE FEAST *(and not just the food)*

A K O K O





When you walk into AKOKO, you could be forgiven for thinking you are in a design or art gallery, one of the very chic and fashionable ones you find all over these trendy Fitzrovia streets. But this is a restaurant. And, oh my, what a restaurant. Whilst undoubtedly, the food is its shining star, nonetheless everything else, without exception, is also a work of art. Literally.

AKOKO is beauty personified. The space is breathtaking. Designed by Rene Dekker, it pays homage to rural Africa with terracotta clay walls and lighting that is evocative of those unequalled African sunsets. Although it most definitely is reminiscent of Africa, it is a reinvented minimalist and uber chic interpretation. It is what you would expect – but turned on its head and so totally unexpected at the same time. Brown dominates.

The walls are adorned with African art by two contemporary artists, Rahman Akar and Adeniyi Olagunju. These are part of a permanent collection but will be rotated with different works from other African artists. So, yes, a gallery within a restaurant. One piece of art is made from the dried pods of an African palm tree then sprayed with gold – so whilst they look like they could be hanging in the Saatchi gallery, they are very authentic to their roots. It is a nod to the past, to not forgetting where we came from but acknowledging it and then making it relevant to the time we live in now.

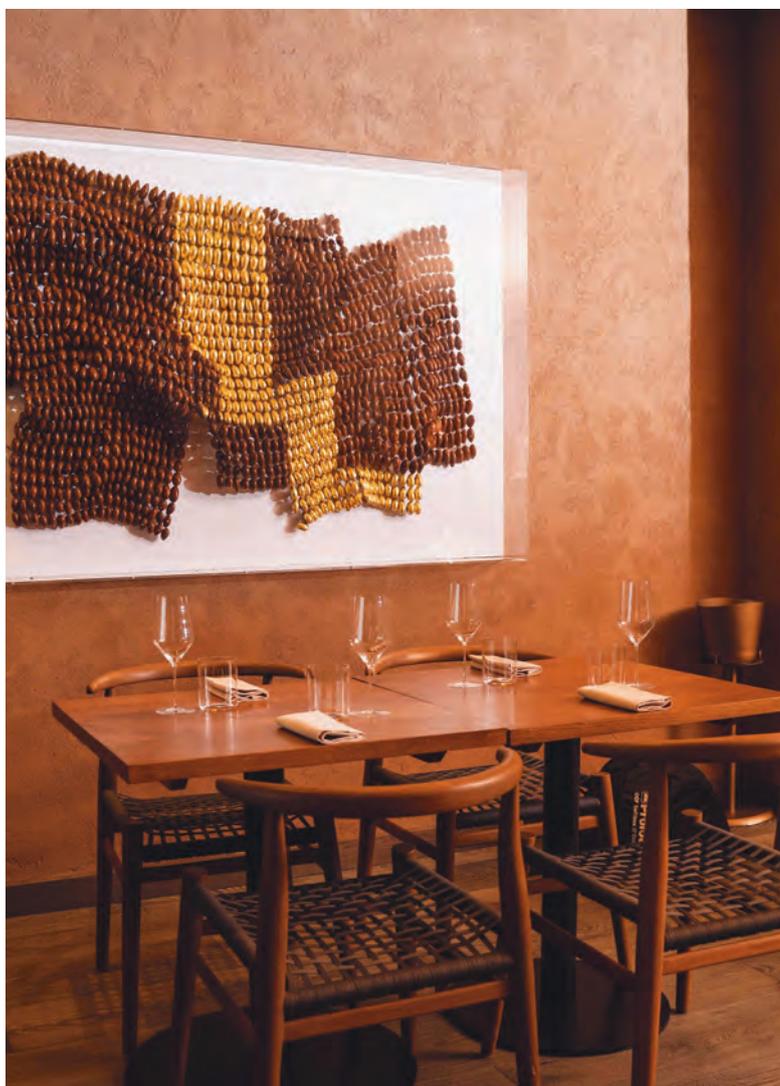
Then there is the furniture. Simple and very stylish. The tables and chairs could have been taken straight out of the Design Museum. And they are super comfortable too – which is fortunate as a meal at AKOKO is not a rushed experience but something that takes hours and you actually never want to end.

Before our meal, we indulged in a cocktail whilst we were waiting to chat to the owner, Aji Akokomi. I opted for my usual Negroni – which was served with a twist of cacao and dates and which was in fact excellent and my companion chose a '75; moscatel and eau de vie infused with fig leaves and honey. Just divine.

Akokomi arrived hand in hand with his son, a delightful child of around 10 – and this summed up the AKOKO vibe in a nutshell. Yes this is high end dining in a very arty setting, but it is friendly and warm and comfortable at the same time; not an easy combination to achieve.

The staff are welcoming and informative and happy to tell you stories about the food, the wines, the art. Music is chilled and not overpowering but definitely adding to the atmosphere.

Akokomi's story of how AKOKO came to be is as extraordinary as the place itself. He says his vision began about four years ago. He said he loves art galleries and also "proper" good food and wanted to create somewhere that combines both. He adores various cuisines, Indian, French, Japanese and questioned why in a city that offers such multi-cultural delights, there was such a gap for high end African cuisine. Yes there are street food pop ups in places like



*“The tables and chairs could have been taken straight out of the Design Museum.”*





*“Akokomi is a man who is all about quality, perfection and family.”*

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Peckham but nothing really at the top end. He knew when he entertained his friends, they really loved the Nigerian food he treated them to so he felt there was a genuine gap that needed to be filled. He started to put together a feasibility plan – and made the plan a reality.

The surprising (very) fact here is that Akokomi is completely new to the hospitality sector. His career was in IT. This is his first foray into restaurants. He took his time, learned, experimented with researching dishes, employed a consultant to help with the numbers. His attention to detail is second to none. There is nothing in the restaurant that is not African, that is not beautiful, that is not art in the true sense.

Akokomi is a man who is all about quality, perfection and family. Everyone involved in AKOKO is a part of the team; from the suppliers to the staff to the clientele. Everything is sourced from the very best producers. And everything is prepared, cooked and served with the utmost passion. It is testament to the nature of the man that in preparing to set up the restaurant, Akokomi took himself to a school for food and wine so he could roll up his sleeves and really learn his trade.

The chefs at AKOKO are not all African; the Head chef is Theo Clench and the team believes that great chefs are capable of cooking any cuisine. Akokomi is currently working with Westminster Kingsway college to bring young West African chefs into the restaurant on internships to give them a chance to be a part of the amazing family. He is also recruiting some incredible chefs from Nigeria to add to the melting pot.

Akokomi says AKOKO’s food is based on three pillars; fire – a lot of the dishes are prepared on charcoal, spices which he says are cleverly chosen and used so as to compliment rather than overpower and umami which he sees as fundamental to West African cuisine. Akokomi left us to go and chat to the other diners, to introduce his son to them, and so we began our tasting menu.

First, we were treated to some welcome snacks. Before we even tasted them we were both utterly blown away by the presentation and the stunning bowls they were served in. One of the waiters explained to us that each and every piece of crockery in the restaurant was designed and created exclusively for them. Each one is hand made and each is slightly different. Every dish is served on its own signature plate. Akokomi himself designed one but other artists include Jun Rhee, Andreas Emmanuel and Sarah Jerath.

So far into this article and not a mention of the food itself thus far. Everything is a prelude to it. It is, without question, the star of the show.

AKOKO is only a tasting menu. Whilst allergies and dietary requirements are taken into consideration, we generally get what we are given. And what we are given is perfection.

Our snacks comprised of yam croquettes, smoked fish and a savoury doughnut filled with pig’s cheek. We were advised which order to eat them in and whilst each one was just an explosion of taste and flavour and yummy, the combination of the three was sensational.

Next came Gambian oyster – a grilled oyster in a “stew”. My companion’s eyes nearly popped out of his head at the beauty of this piece and he said he felt there was an orchestra playing in his mouth.



Guinness bread with yassa butter was its own course. Different. But divine. Not where you would expect bread to be served chronologically but an inspired decision and smart to give it its own well justified and deserved status.

Next we had barbecued octopus served with a peanut and chocolate sauce – the flavours married together exquisitely. The dish was served with a cracker which on asking we found was made with a roasted octopus head.

Our next feast was smoked trout which literally melted in our mouths.

The famous Jollof rice pot was next and it did not disappoint. It was served with carrots which were meaty and cooked in a way I had never experienced before. Who thought carrots could taste this good?



## THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW AFRICA

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Next came barbecued kebabs which were spicy and succulent.

By this point, we were wondering if this feast would ever end. Even though we had eaten so much we did not feel bloated and our taste buds were selfishly crying out for more.

The final savoury course was 70 day aged beef served with kale in a melon seed sauce. It was a fitting end to this section of the menu.

But the best part was still to come; a pre-dessert of vanilla and citrus followed by pineapple and smoked sorbet and finally the most gorgeous coffee and petits fours – one of which was made with scotch bonnet.

Someone once said that if you are going to put lots of calories in your mouth then they had better be worth it. These were more than worth it. This is probably the best meal you will ever eat.

You may have noticed that I have not mentioned the wines so far. That is because they deserve their own section. We had opted for the wine pairing which was served to us by the Assistant General Manager, Rachael, a most charming, knowledgeable and friendly Canadian.

The wines are all natural and organic and chosen by AKOKO's consultant sommelier, Honey Spencer. They were unexpected, different. Each one went perfectly with the food and each one was utterly delicious. We had (amongst others) orange wine

made from the Moscatel grape that had been made under flor, a single fermentation sparkling English made from the Ortega grape, a Moravian Zweigelt, a Silvaner Beerenauslese with desert and even an African beer to go with our kebabs. Rachael took the time and care to impart as much information as we were keen to drink up (excuse the pun) about each one. For someone like me who has just completed my WSET Level 3 qualification, this was one of the most exciting experiences.

Experience is a great word to use when reviewing AKOKO. It is the most incredible experience. As you would expect, this is not a cheap restaurant – the tasting menu is £95 and the wine pairing £75 – but these prices are crazily reasonable in the context of what you get and in comparison with other high end restaurants in London. We arrived at 12 and left at 4.30. We both said it was an experience we would never forget.

The project was a huge gamble for Akokomi but he is proud of his baby saying it is exactly as he envisioned it and is happy with the reception he is getting. Already he is thinking of the next restaurant which he imagines to be less high end, a la carte rather than tasting and which also sells ingredients and even the plates and cutlery. Watch this space.

### AKOKO

21 Berners St, London W1T 3LP

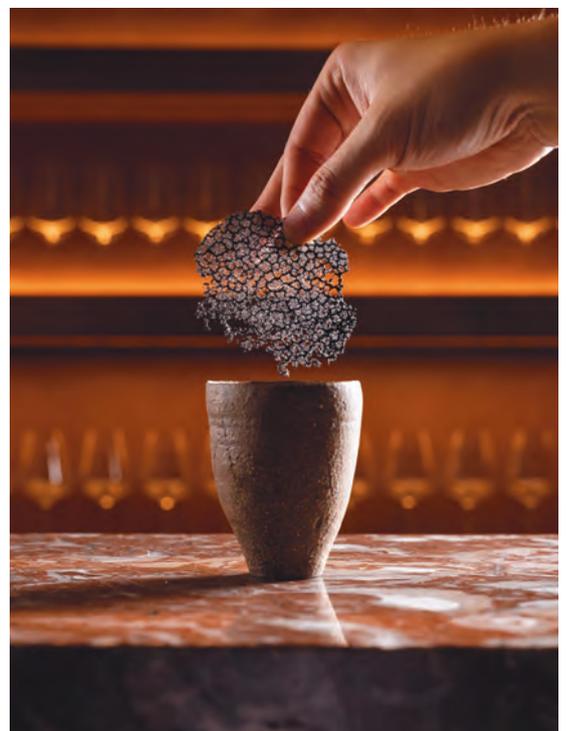
Wednesday 6–9pm

Thursday 6–9pm

Friday 6–9pm

Saturday 12–2pm, 6–9pm

Photography by Food Story Media Ltd.





# THE ART OF STORYTELLING

## (HOW CINDERELLA GOT TO THE BALL)

It was a warm June afternoon and my friend and I were walking through Mayfair when we both stopped in our tracks. There in a gallery window was the most incredible piece of art. Both of us are art lovers and both of us were absolutely wowed by this piece. It was simple yet complex. Naive yet sophisticated, African yet European. Tantalising contradictions.



## THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW AFRICA

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We were rushing to an appointment but that work of art attached itself into our heads and our hearts so as soon as our commitment ended, we found ourselves magnetically drawn back to Davies Street and to the JD Malat gallery.

As we walked inside our senses were attacked with a sledgehammer of emotions as the art encompassed us. Huge, bold, colourful canvases – some of a single face, some a myriad of people and objects telling intricate stories. Each image felt like it had a history to reveal, a wealth of experience.

There was a man sitting on a bench looking at the work. He did not look like he belonged in this very classy Mayfair establishment.

My friend and I went downstairs where the exhibition continued and having drunk it all in with all its glory, we sat down to watch a short film about the author who was being interviewed by an eminent Sotheby's person. We both realised in a heartbeat that the out of place man upstairs was the artist so we literally ran back to meet and to talk to him.

Kojo Marfo is as lovely as he is talented. He was happy to meet us and seemed humbled that we both adored his work so much. He chatted a little about the inspiration and the stories behind his art and introduced us to the gallery owner, Jean-David (the JD).

I asked if I could interview him for this magazine and he graciously accepted and invited us to an interview he was giving the coming Sunday.





On the Sunday, the gallery was packed. The interview began and the amazing story unfolded. In lockdown, JD Malat had run a “competition” to find a new artist. Kojo’s girlfriend (against his wishes and knowledge) entered him. He won. Hands down. Which was how he came to be doing a solo show in one of the most prestigious galleries in the world. Just a year or so earlier Kojo was painting from his living room. From that to a show that sold out before it even opened is quite the fairytale.

Experts discussed Kojo’s use of acrylics trying to decipher and interpret why these were chosen and what they represented. Kojo explained that the room he worked in was so small that oils would take too long to dry and so he chose acrylics so he could paint more, quicker.

Listening to him speak was as mesmerising as the art itself. He was awkward, but being the star of such a show and being the centre and focus of all the attention at the same time supremely comfortable in his own skin, sure about himself and his work.

A few weeks later, Kojo and I met for lunch at Jose Pizarro’s new restaurant in the Royal Academy and he told me the intricate tapestry of his life story to date. Stories seem an intrinsic part of both Kojo himself and his art.

Kojo was born and brought up in Ghana in a family of women and describes his upbringing as “one everyone would be lucky to have. We were not rich but we were happy.” In the 50s or 60s his aunt’s husband, who was a seaman, introduced his religion – Jehovah’s Witness – to the



family and Kojo was raised in the faith. He says he no longer practices and has drifted but it is in his heritage. But Kojo’s grandmother was a Catholic and as he lived with her for a while he was baptised. Kojo says that whilst he was given a lot of freedom, it was against a backdrop of restrictions and fear. He says he was shielded and really only mixed with other people from the faith.

As a teenager, Kojo decided he didn’t like school and no longer wanted to go. Somehow his mother agreed to this. His only intention was to leave the country and through his aunt who was one of the most revered people in the town he lived in and was well connected he got that opportunity. He and his brother went to America – supposedly to study although that never happened – and stayed with another aunt. His first impression was that he loved it; he was experiencing everything he had seen on TV and felt he was living in a movie. But after two years, his aunt felt worried he was getting into bad ways so he was sent back to Ghana.

*“As we walked inside our senses were attacked with a sledgehammer of emotions as the art encompassed us.”*

Then he came to London – which was not what he was expecting. He felt people were not friendly. It was a different world and he did not like it. He got a job in Tesco stacking shelves at night and realised working for someone else was not for him. He had been drawing for a while but only on small bits of paper but at this point – around 2001 – he did his first painting – a portrait of a friend. He took it to a gallery in Chelsea whose advice was give it to your friend. Kojo’s hopes were dashed. So he went back to work – at Sainsbury’s. It was very regimented – tannoys told you to go on break – and come back. Kojo could not get his head around it all. It was not for him. Kojo did not understand why he had to go by someone else’s rules. He says this gave him the opportunity to look at himself and his life. Kojo said he realised art did not have to be a specific representation of people and he checked with his mother if she was comfortable with him painting or whether it conflicted with her religion. She said as long as he was not tricked into producing paintings that referenced African gods



(which then was what most of the African art bought by Europeans portrayed) he had her blessing.

By 2003 Kojo had given up other work and was committed to his art full time. But he fell prey to some con artists who took his art to sell and never paid him. Realising he needed a middleman to sell his art and having no faith or trust in them after having his fingers burned he decided to take a different road, again. He set up a stall on Commercial Road and designed and sold tee-shirts. They were selling like hot cakes. He was buying the tee-shirts at £1 each and selling them for £10.

By 2008 he was bored and decided that was it. He wanted to return to art. He was ready.

Friends were encouraging him to join social media but he couldn't see the point. He eventually succumbed but when he didn't get an immediate response he decided to take matters into his own hands and approach galleries. He was taken on by a gallery in Brick Lane, then Wimbledon, then Balham, then Poole in Dorset – everything began to change. He discovered Saatchi online and started selling through them as well. He admits this panicked him as there were so many artists and it was like a huge marketplace so he couldn't figure how to stand out. He realised that at the lower price end there were literally thousands of artists whereas at the higher end there were only a few. So he pitched high. It worked. He attracted people in with a high price piece but then the rest of the work was properly priced so people bought that. He achieved his aim; he stood out from the crowd.

Kojo began his career in art by talking about his hometown. He painted from memory – incidents and scenes from his childhood that were still etched vividly in his brain. He then moved on to using art to address social issues which is what defines his work today.



In 2017 he was approached by an LA gallery who offered him the world but it all came to nothing. But Kojo was making a living; selling through Saatchi, selling through a Chinese gallery – and through social media which has finally taken off. His experience with galleries had left a bitter taste in his mouth making him sceptical and cynical of them.

In 2020 when lockdown happened he could no longer get to his studio and he needed to support himself so he and his girlfriend turned their living room into a studio. It was his girlfriend who saw JD Malet advertising for new artists. Kojo dismissed it from his past experiences. His girlfriend ignored him and entered anyway.

The rest is history. Every art publication is writing about Kojo. His work is in demand not just by collectors but by serious investors. Aspinal of London used two of his paintings to produce limited edition scarves which immediately sold out. His work is currently on exhibition in Istanbul. Another show is being planned for Mayfair. Against all the odds, this self trained and taught artist is now represented by one of the top commercial galleries in the world – and he is literally smashing it. His work is selling before the paint has even dried.

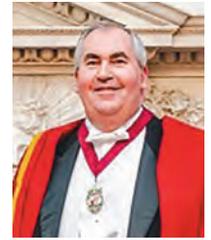
Kojo Marfo is a true artist. He has been described as the "African Picasso", something Kojo shrugs off. He is no clone. He is his own man. And his work speaks for itself.

# LIVERY NEWS

A look at what has been happening.

## Master's Word

### What a great way to start to the Livery Year!



Robert Bell

**We had the honour of having Past Master Solicitor Alderman Vincent Keaveny becoming Lord Mayor in November for the year 2021–2022. We are absolutely delighted for Vincent and the Lady Mayoress, Amanda and send them our heartiest best wishes for an excellent year at Mansion House and we look forward to doing everything we can to support them.**

As Vincent's "Mother Company", a delegation comprising Master, Wardens and Past Masters Martin Roberts and Nick Hughes had the honour of presenting Vincent and Amanda with a silver box featuring an owl which is the symbol of our Company, at the Presentation of Addresses at Guildhall. The following day our float in the Lord Mayor's Show was positioned at the start of the procession, and featured a glittering array of colourful costumes thanking key workers for their contribution during the COVID pandemic. Many thanks to Gareth Ledsham, Liz Thomas and all the Whittington Committee for all their hard work in putting on such a marvellous display. Thank you also to all our walkers who joined the float from the Company along with representatives from the national Law Society, our Cadets and everyone else who took part. It was a great day out enjoyed by all. Special thanks are also due to Mahogany Carnival for providing the wonderful costumes and Slaughter and May for their generous hospitality and loan of

their facilities for the walkers on the day. The Master and Wardens also took part, travelling in an open topped carriage to Royal Courts of Justice to see Vincent sworn in by the Lord Chief Justice and other senior members of the Judiciary.

Our congratulations also go to our Liveryman, Alderman Alison Gowman for being elected Sheriff at the end of October. We look forward to supporting her as well in the year ahead and hope she has a marvellous year at the Old Bailey. It is a great honour to have two of the most prestigious positions in the Corporation of London now held by members of our Company and it is really encouraging to see that the Solicitors' Company continues to widen and strengthen its relationship with the Corporation.

#### Wig & Pen

Each year the Master of the Company and the Chair of the CLLS (Edward Sparrow) have the pleasure of

judging the Wig & Pen Prize. The Company gives this prize to recognise the outstanding pro bono contribution by an individual solicitor or team/firm of solicitors. This year the standard of entries was particularly high, and may I thank all those who entered and took time to tell us about the amazing work they do for others. Both Edward and I were very impressed with all the entries and this inevitably made our task of judging even more difficult. However, after much deliberation we decided to award this year's Wig & Pen Prize to Angela Dimsdale-Gill of Hogan Lovells LLP for her novel, specialist, and vital work with Hostage International, an organisation which supports hostages and their families caught up in these unusual and distressing situations with no hope of legal aid. The judges also felt that special mention should be made of the runners-up, Morrison & Foerster, for their invaluable work in partnership with Z2K, helping those most disadvantaged in our society have proper legal representation to advance their cases for disability benefits. The assistance they give fills an important gap in state funding for a range of deserving individuals and ensuring they have access to justice. Our warm congratulations to Angela as winner and to Morrison & Foerster as runners-up.



### Past & Present

The past 18 months have been usual to say the least! As a Company, the Clerk Linzi James and the Staff at College Hill were tremendous in responding to the challenge this represented. We were able to organise a wide range of online events and learned a lot about their accessibility, inclusivity and the great attendance they encouraged. At our online events we tasted most things capable of being drunk, gin, wine, tea and wine again! We went on a virtual Rhone wine tour, were led through a zoom tour of Shakespeare's London, attended an online painting class, organised a highly amusing quiz evening and held numerous virtual drinks parties for the members of the Company, both old and new. More recently in October, Past Master & Alderman David Graves kindly gave us an interesting insight into the "Civic Life of the City" and the history of the Livery and the Corporation.

We will certainly be including online events on our social calendar in the future.

The much anticipated return of in-person events saw our Livery Dinner take place on 1st December 2021 in the magnificent surroundings of Goldsmith Hall where we welcomed our guest speaker, the Recorder of London, His Honour Judge Mark Lucraft QC. We also welcomed the return of our joint Christmas Carol Service with the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators at St Mary Le Bow on 8th December. This year we were also joined by the Worshipful Company of International Bankers.

Looking further into the future we have our Banquet at Mansion House in Spring 2022 which we hope will be in the presence of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. Our high-profile guest speaker is yet to be announced but watch this space!

### Members Survey

Talking of looking to the future! As we came out of COVID restrictions we wanted to understand what our members thought about what the Company offered and what we could do better. Therefore, in September this year, for the first time in the history of the Solicitors' Company, we formally asked our members for their thoughts on the Company through an anonymous online engagement survey. I was delighted that so many of you took the time to respond and that the survey generated so much valuable qualitative data. Having now analysed that data and considered it carefully, I am able to share with you not only the key overarching themes coming out of the survey, but the actions the Company plans to take to ensure that we continue to deliver what our membership values most and what you would like us to aspire to going forward.

I am confident that, with your support, we can deliver on these promises and that our Company will not just continue to thrive but also become a modern Livery Company in the fullest sense. We have set out details of the themes that emerged from the survey and the actions we intend to take.

Once you have had an opportunity to consider these, I hope that they will inspire you and particularly more recent members of the Company to:

- volunteer to join one of our new and re-invigorated Committees so become involved by "doing".
- become a Liveryman (if still a Freeman) in order that you have the opportunity to enjoy all the Company has to offer as well as playing a bigger part in contributing to the unique nature of the City of London; and/or
- make regular contributions to our Charitable Fund by way of standing order or review the order already in place, so that you can be confident that you are personally donating to the charities we

support, and which benefit so greatly from our collective giving.

If you would like to explore any of these options further, please do contact our Clerk, Linzi James, [clerk@citysolicitors.org.uk](mailto:clerk@citysolicitors.org.uk)

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your continuing support of the Company in these challenging times and may I wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

**All good wishes**  
**Robert**

### WHAT YOU SAID!

#### Key Survey Themes:

1. The Company impressively demonstrated, during the pandemic, that it can provide a wide variety of low cost/inclusive events, and this should continue post-COVID restrictions – as part of a blended online/in-person offering.
2. Whilst members do enjoy formal dinners, and the opportunity these offer to enjoy the City's historic buildings, there should also be some lower cost/more casual dinner options.
3. The Company should enhance its support for its new members, through a formal buddy scheme.
4. The Company and its members should raise their charitable ambitions.
5. Members would like to hear more about the Company's charitable giving and its activities more generally.
6. Increasing diversity is a given, and the Company should "just do it" – in other words, ED&I considerations should pervade the Company's thought processes and be suitably front of mind in all it does.
7. The Company's should focus on offering what law firms cannot – promoting/preserving the history of London/civic life; offering collegiality with lawyers from other firms through its charitable endeavours and events; promoting City solicitors, alongside the CLLS, through all its activities.
8. Care should be taken not to lose sight of the wish of the Company's members to (alongside serious activities) "just have fun".

### WHAT WE ARE DOING!

#### Planned Actions Include:

1. We are forming a new Social and Events Committee to make sure we continue to deliver the number and variety of events our members expect and enjoy.
2. Our Livery Committee will be re-purposed to focus on the Company's "outward facing" links – in particular: interactions with other livery companies; maintaining/maximising the benefit of our links with legal contacts in the military; and supporting young cadets.
3. Our Whittington Committee's activities will be expanded with a focus on low-cost events/things more likely to appeal to younger members and will also take the lead in putting a more formal buddy scheme in place.
4. All of our Committees will revisit their terms of reference and membership to make sure their work is suitably refreshed and have more opportunities for more of our members to get involved.
5. Talks on the history of the Company and civic life will be organised and repeated at suitable intervals.
6. Talks on the work of the Charities Committee will also be organised and repeated at suitable intervals – with some of our charity partners telling us more about what they do with our money and the impact it has.
7. Our Membership Committee will continue to ensure that we engage with our members at suitable intervals, including by reaching out to a number of representative groups to explore what their (diverse) lawyers believe would make membership of the Company attractive. This in turn will inform the work of all of our Committees.

# THE REINCARNATION OF THE AUTOMOBILE

## How the motor industry is shaping the radical transition towards electric vehicle ownership for all

By Joel Leigh

The Renaissance in the 14th Century marked a paradigm shift in society which set humanity on the road to the modern era, and comparisons with the rebirth of European civilisation and the motor industry today may appear somewhat hyperbolic, yet the global pandemic has stimulated an exponential trend towards technology led companies which are of necessity stronger, leaner, and more efficient.

With less than a decade until the deadline to achieve United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals however, 2030 presents a definitive environmental backstop for motor manufacturers, alongside numerous existing national and international climate, decarbonisation, and transport targets. And these are only some of the challenges to be contended with, with others in the past year including a global shortage in semiconductors, increased logistics costs and the recent fuel supply crisis.

So many problems, so little time; but how is the global car industry reinventing the wheel, and to what extent are these changes being accepted and adopted by the public?

First up are the digital retail and agency models which have revolutionised the way in which new cars are bought and sold. Tesla was the first to embrace the direct-to-consumer sales model, but this strategy has since been copied by established manufacturers such as Audi, Ford, and Volkswagen. In China, state supported electric vehicle (EV) brands including Nio and Li Auto rely entirely on direct sales.

The evolution of this business model comes from a recognition that the only way to recoup the huge investments required to bring all-electric vehicles to the market is to significantly increase uptake by the masses, and that failure could be risked in this respect by sub-contracting the sales process to independent dealer networks.

For their part dealers appear surprisingly relaxed about this development since it transfers the primary financial risk to manufacturers but also allows for the possibility of picking up the ball once cost efficiencies have come into play.

In another fundamental shift in buying behaviour, consumers are beginning to reject the traditional concept of car ownership in favour of subscription programmes which allow them

the use of EVs as and when they need them. Often, these programmes provide for cars to be insured, maintained, taxed, and even re-charged at the manufacturer's expense. And consumers can generally walk away from the arrangement with no more than three months' notice.

This change in behaviour is being fuelled by a post COVID-19 society which has embraced new technology and working practices but is also more willing to engage over climate change initiatives.

Geely, the Chinese parent company of Volvo, Lotus and Polestar, has been at the forefront of this revolution via its new marque Lynk & Co, a pared down and more affordable offering than its aforementioned siblings. Lynk owners are able to purchase then share their car with other users on a pay per use basis, allowing them to earn money and offset running costs for the 96% of the time the car would be sat on the drive. The system uses a digital key, thus removing the need to meet fellow sharers, though there's a Lynk & Co club for those wishing to get together with like-minded drivers.

In a further blow to the financially more lucrative ownership model, rental giant Hertz has bounced back from bankruptcy by placing an order for 100,000 Tesla Model 3's, the single largest order in EV history. The move represents a significant first step in Hertz's ambition to both electrify its global fleet and, as its interim chief executive Mark Fields puts it, 'democratise access to electric vehicles'. It estimates that up to half of these vehicles will be leased to Uber to support its drive network.

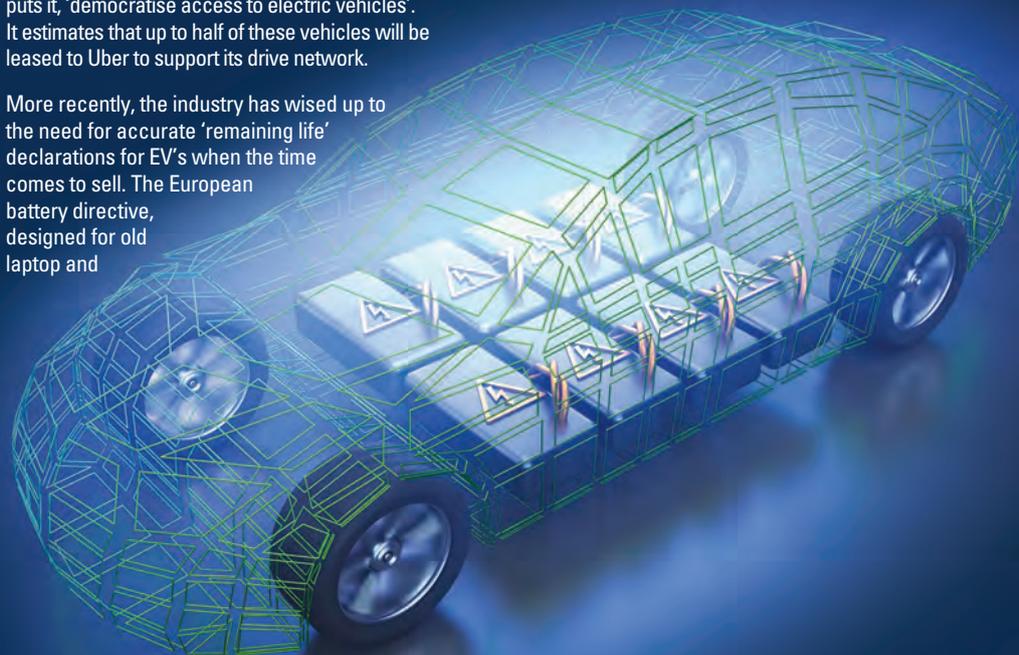
More recently, the industry has wised up to the need for accurate 'remaining life' declarations for EV's when the time comes to sell. The European battery directive, designed for old laptop and

smartphone batteries, is being retooled to make it easier to recycle existing batteries back into the supply chain, partly in recognition of potential raw material shortages of the metals needed for EV batteries, as demand continues to grow. These include nickel and cobalt but also lithium, pre-eminent in the market since Sony perfected its use for video camera batteries in the early 1990's but expected to fall into supply deficit as early as 2022.

Battery producers have also been working on alternate technologies, and Chinese company CATL has recently unveiled a new sodium-ion battery for use in EVs. The first gen example has been demonstrated to perform well in cold weather and have fast charging capability, and unlike lithium-ion batteries does not require the use of cobalt, which has been associated with human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Sodium has the added benefit of being the sixth most abundant element on earth.

The automotive giants are actively driving change in a bid to capitalise on society's 'new normal', following the global onslaught of COVID-19 and the increasingly hard to ignore effects of climate change. For them (and us) it's a case of evolve or die, but the early signs are certainly hopeful.

**Joel Leigh is the motoring correspondent of City Solicitor and a Partner at Howard Kennedy LLP**



## ONE LAST WORD

## DID YOU KNOW?

## The escape of the sound of heaven

**Pilgrims pack every space of the Sistine Chapel. Outside, it is still dark. The faithful have flocked to Rome for Holy Week. A highlight is to attend matins and to be able to listen to the Papal Choir's heavenly music. The service begins at 3am with the chapel lit by just 27 candles. Then the choir begins to sing. A soloist hits a soaring high C. Somehow, it seems as though the sound of heaven is being sung on earth.**

Gregorio Allegri's 'Miserere mei, Deus' is one of the most devastatingly beautiful pieces of choral works ever composed. It is perhaps the best known example of late-Renaissance music, but, if the strictures of the Papacy had been followed, it would have been unknown outside of the confines of the Sistine Chapel.

The piece was written sometime around 1638. It had become so famous in the next century that the Papacy banned, on the pain of excommunication, its performance outside of the Sistine Chapel. For many years, the only way of hearing the music would be to attend one of the two Holy Week matins services in which it was performed.

Rarely can the senses have been so ravished – the Baroque splendour of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, the soaring voices of the Papal Choir and the otherworldly genius of Allegri's composition provide the evocative setting. At 3am, the service would begin, with the light of 27 candles burning brightly, dancing sacred light off the newly painted frescoes. They were extinguished one by one until only a single flame was left. The service was often led by the Pope, and must have been an experience of religious ecstasy for the Holy Week pilgrims. Rarely can the divine have been so sumptuously invoked.

It was this expression of devotion that was so jealously guarded by the Supreme Pontiff. Whether out of fear of the music's impact being diluted or a simple desire to retain the celebrated work within the confines of Rome and thereby ensure the attendance of devotees, the Papacy

forbade the work to be written down or sung outside of the Sistine Chapel.

Only three copies ever officially left the Vatican. One was sent to the Holy Roman Emperor, a second to the King of Portugal and a third to the Italian musician Padre Martini. Even Catholic royalty only received a simplified version, as evidenced by a complaint from the Portuguese.

The music remained largely confined to Rome until its next brush with genius. On 11 April 1770 Leopold Mozart and his son Wolfgang arrived in Rome as part of their grand tour of Italy. They had arrived in Holy Week, in time for Easter and in time to attend the Wednesday Tenebrae in the Sistine Chapel and hear the famous Miserere.



The 14-year old prodigy then returned to his lodgings and committed the piece to paper entirely from memory. He returned to the Sistine Chapel on Good Friday to review his manuscript, and made a few minor corrections. His father boasted of his son's achievements in a letter to his wife dated 14 April 1770:

"...You have often heard of the famous Miserere in Rome, which is so greatly prized that the performers are forbidden on pain of excommunication to take away a single part of it, copy it or to give it to anyone. But we have it already. Wolfgang has written it down and we would have sent it to Salzburg in this letter, if it were not necessary for us to be there to perform it. But the manner of performance contributes more to its effect than the composition itself. Moreover, as it is one of the secrets of Rome, we do not wish to let it fall into other hands..."

Mozart may not have let loose the secrets of Rome, but the composition did soon after find its way to London via Dr Charles Burney. And, once revealed, the music became widely available. It is unlikely that Mozart was the sole conduit for its circulation. But, if anyone was able to do justice to Allegri's composition, it was Mozart.

This article was provided courtesy of Ian Chapman-Curry, Principal Associate at Gowling WLG and host of the Almost History podcast.

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