

The Origins of Livery – A Song  
(Modern Major General)

*(Allegro vivace)*

The origins of Liv'ry in the City are a "mystery";  
The reason for the numbering is lost in mists of history;  
It was in 1515 when the precedence was ratified;  
Since when the Great Twelve Companies have always seemed quite satisfied.  
The Mercers sit at number one, the Grocers are at number two;  
Then Drapers, Fish and Goldsmiths come, with Skinners and the MTs, who  
Not wanting to be number seven, assert they should be number six,  
A paradox the Lord Mayor sorted with a simple City fix:

To be at sixes and at sevens is an English paradox,  
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To be at sixes and at sevens is an English paraparadox.

The Haberdashers, Salters and the Ironmongers follow next;  
The Vintners and the Clothworkers and Dyers – thirteen – always vexed;  
In short in matters civic and in language mathematical  
The **Weavers** are the hardest hit by order categorical.

The Brewers, Leathersellers and the Pewterers are next in line;  
Then Barbers, Cutlers, Bakers and Wax Chandlers in their liv'ry fine;  
Then Tallow Chandlers, Armourers and Girdlers and the Butchers trot;  
With Saddlers, Carpenters and Cordwainers – oh! what a funny lot!  
The Company of Painters and the Curriers established next  
Then Masons, Plumbers, Innholders and Founders found the ancient text  
To welcome Poulterers, Cooks and Coopers, Tylers and the Brick Layers too;  
And male-only Bowyers' Master who uniquely serves for two. *(Years, that is.)*

A two-year term for Bowyers – it's a job that only men dare do,  
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The Fletchers and the Blacksmiths and the Joiners are the next in line;  
Then come ourselves at **42**, some say the finest of the fine;  
In short in matters civic and in language mathematical  
The **Weavers** are the hardest hit by order categorical.

*(Slower)*

There follow many more – some ancient and a few contempor'ry'  
The modern ones include the Cleaners and the jolly Actu'ry;  
The Educators and the Art Scholars are new kids on the block;  
The ITs and the Firemen and the Woolmen with their City flock;  
The Horners are a happy lot, the Framework Knitters know what's knot;  
The Mariners are "hon'rabable", the Gardeners tend their little plot;  
Distillers know their armagnac, their gin and scotch and vodka too;

*(a tempo, vivace)*

Musicians like a tippie and, believe me, they can sink a few!

The **Weavers** are the oldest and they should be known as number one,  
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The Liv'ry is an ancient lot of Masters quite adventury;  
And **Weavers** know that they've been number one across the centuries;  
In short in matters civic and in language mathematical  
The **Weavers** should be number one in order categorical.

*(Encore verse 3: " Presto agitato, per favour, Maestro"!)*