

## HISTORY OF THE COMPANY OF WATERMEN AND LIGHTERMEN OF THE RIVER THAMES

The Company of Watermen and Lightermen was established by Act of Parliament in 1555 to control the Watermen on the River Thames responsible for the movement of goods and passengers. Indeed it remains the only ancient City Guild to be formed and controlled by Act of Parliament.



Silver Room and Parlour to form a suite of rooms that are both elegant and adaptable to modern day requirements.

Today the Watermen and Lightermen still work on the River Thames, the former being concerned with passenger transport and the latter with the carriage of goods. The young Freemen of the Company are eligible to participate in the Doggett's Coat and Badge Race, which has been held annually since 1715. This gruelling sculling race is held each July and goes along the river from London Bridge to Chelsea. The winner has the honour of being awarded the scarlet coat, breeches and silver arm badge that are based on the original costume of an eighteenth century Watermen.

The present day Hall dates back to 1780 and remains the only original Georgian Hall in the City of London. It was designed by William Blackburn and is a perfect example of eighteenth century domestic architecture.

The Hall was extended in 1983 to include a more substantial dining and meeting facility, the Freemen's Room, which blends in perfectly with the intimate atmosphere of the Court Room, the

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