

**Manuscript of the Month**  
**November 2011**

**Photograph of Sir Frederick Alfred Hoare as Lord Mayor of London, 1961-62**



Fifty years ago this month Sir Frederick (Derick) Alfred Hoare (1913-86) formally took office as the 634th elected Lord Mayor of London. In doing so he was following in the footsteps of two ancestors: Sir Richard Hoare Kt, founder of Hoare's Bank, who had been elected Mayor some 299 years earlier, in 1712, and his grandson, also Sir Richard Hoare Kt, who had served as Lord Mayor in 1745-46. Like his predecessors Derick was to undertake a strenuous year of civic duty. And like the second Sir Richard he resolved to keep a diary of his year in office.

Although Derick had been Alderman for Farringdon Without since 1950 and had served as Sheriff in 1956-57, he was reluctant to take on the role of Lord Mayor. As he later recalled, it was the President of the Farringdon Ward Club who had initially suggested the idea and Derick's fellow Partners at Hoare's Bank who had persuaded him to stand. To celebrate his appointment, all the bank's staff and pensioners were awarded a bonus of one month's salary or pension.

Derick's year of office did not get off to the smoothest of starts, however. A mix up over timings meant that on the day of his admittance, 10 November, he and his wife Mary were late for lunch with the outgoing Mayor, while the traditional Lord Mayor's Show the next day took place in torrential rain. As Derick confessed in his diary, the ritual and ceremony surrounding the Mayoralty was a daunting prospect: *Found the ceremony of swearing the oath at the Law Courts pretty testing. Before the Lord Chief Justice hat on for entry – off 3 times quickly – on again – off when he addressed the new Lord Mayor & for the Oath. On again & off again at the end. Before the Master of the Rolls very different. On for entry off 3 times very slowly as the five Judges must have time to balance their most peculiar hats. On again only twice. Remain uncovered most of the time. On again at the end – off again & on again. Very surprised at getting it right.* He was worried too by the thought of having to make so many speeches, although he found a sympathetic ally at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in the form of the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, who proved to be *Most comforting all the way through over my hating making speeches so much. Says he absolutely hates it & so did Winston Churchill.*

With the initial ceremonies concluded, Derick was plunged headlong into a punishing schedule of meetings and engagements. Part of his duties included presiding over both the Court of Aldermen and the Court of Common Council, as well as attending various Aldermanic Committees and (as chief Magistrate) sittings at the Old Bailey. These did not alarm him unduly: *The one job as Lord Mayor that does not worry me is presiding over any kind of meeting.* But the overwhelming majority of his time was to be spent fulfilling over 1,000 public engagements.

Some of these engagements were aimed at promoting London as a centre for trade and business. Thus Derick found himself welcoming fellow Mayors and trade delegations from cities as far afield

as Ottawa, Bombay, Tokyo and Dar es Salaam. Even a party of Soviet Trade Unionists made its way to Mansion House, while Derick himself visited Dublin and Poland and attended a Business Efficiency Exhibition at Olympia. Additionally, Derick was, as the official guidelines put it, *frequently called upon by the Government to receive distinguished personages and delegations and offer hospitality worthy of the nation.* Amongst them were the President of Ivory Coast, West Germany's future Chancellor Willy Brandt, thirty former members of the Dutch Resistance and the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires.

The remaining engagements were an eclectic mix, designed in the main to signal public support for a multitude of good causes. They included a party for City Daily Ladies, a ram roast at Custom House Quay and a visit to the Three Score Old People's Club, where Derick duly carved up a 160lbs Christmas pudding (and was presented with the miniature gold bar it contained) before dancing Knees Up Mother Brown with the Club's members. Often Derick found himself juggling a surreal mix of the formal and informal, dining on board the King of Denmark's yacht one moment, opening a new multi-storey car park or shaking hands with 500 Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme gold medallists the next. Then there was the rededication of Bow Bells, the inauguration of a new reservoir at Walton-on-Thames, a service marking the 300th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer, a rally for 5,000 Girl Guides and innumerable deputations on every conceivable subject. One particularly exhausting day, Derick noted, he made nine speeches.

Early diary entries reveal the lack of organization Derick encountered at Mansion House: the constant muddle over timings, dress codes and whether or not speeches were required. And at times he himself sounded more like Mr Pooter than the Lord Mayor of London: *I had to answer a civic toast under extremely difficult conditions, people popping balloons in the middle & too obviously only wanting to be amused.* But although he never quite got over his dread of speech-making, things gradually settled into a routine. And there were some advantages to being Lord Mayor. Early in 1962, Derick, a keen chess player, was invited to play a match against the reigning world champion, Mikhail Botvinnik, and managed to come from behind to force a draw. Then in May that year he watched Tottenham Hotspur beat Burnley 3-1 in the FA Cup Final and hosted a dinner at Mansion House for the entire Hoare's Bank staff.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of Derick's Mayoralty, however, was the Lady Hoare Thalidomide Appeal. Thalidomide had been prescribed to thousands of women worldwide during the late 1950s and early 1960s as a cure for morning sickness. What no one realized was the tragic effect the drug was having on their unborn children. As a result, some 10,000 babies were born with severe deformities, particularly missing or stunted limbs. In July 1962, when the scandal was at its height, Derick's wife was asked, as Lady Mayoress, to front an appeal for £250,000 to help families affected by Thalidomide. Out of this emerged The Lady Hoare Trust, which in 1970 expanded its remit to include other physically disabled children. Today, as part of Contact a Family, the Trust continues to offer practical help to severely disabled children and their families.

Sir Derick's term of office formally ended on 9 November 1962. His final diary entry records his unequivocal relief: *I was thrilled beyond measure with no reservations of any kind to be out of the office of Lord Mayor. Neither Mary or I would go back to Nov last year for a million pounds each. 984 speeches.* Soon afterwards, having been awarded the customary baronetcy, he was able to return to private life and his job at Hoare's Bank.