

Wardens, Aldermen, Freeman, Honoured Guests. A very warm welcome to you all this evening on the occasion of my installation as Master of the Company of Nurses.

It goes without saying that it is an honour and a privilege to be the 4<sup>th</sup> Master of the Company of Nurses. Due to these very strange times that we are living through I have had the pleasure of being installed twice - both virtually. When we agreed the extension of the Immediate Past Master's and my term of office, we didn't imagine that we would still be living with the restrictions for this installation and had hoped that we would be dining in the wonderful Vintners' Hall in all our splendour. What will that feel like I wonder? We have all got rather used to meeting in this way in the comfort and safety of our own homes. How many of us have checked that we can still wear heels! Or fit into that dinner jacket. I am very much looking forward to once again experiencing all the wonderful Livery services and events, but I must admit that it may take some getting used to!

In all seriousness though, we are about to embark on yet another chapter of living in and through this pandemic, and we do need to consider how we will negotiate this both individually and from the Company's perspective.

This morning, with another hat on, I attended a meeting to discuss how we must ensure that the health and well-being of our colleagues in the NHS is given a priority as a result of the work they have undertaken during the pandemic. It goes without saying that there are many who will have found this traumatic and challenging, and not only in their professional life. Each and every one of us will have experienced this period of time differently. We may have suffered personal loss, professional loss and most of us will have been affected by the loss of human contact with those we love - how hard has it been not to be able to hug our loved ones.

It made me think about how important health and wellbeing is to each of us - not just in the workplace setting but in general. As we navigate our way back into the world again we must be mindful of individual circumstances and experiences. Socializing, travelling on public transport and being in close proximity with more than a handful of people will be different for each of us. As Master of the Company, I would like to reassure you that we will be cautious in our approach and will provide a variety of opportunities to enjoy fellowship amongst our Freeman. Nurses in general are stoical and practical but can also ignore the fact that they too need care and attention. So although we might think that we are ready for this brave new world we must be mindful of the fact that each one of us will need to do this in our own individual way.

Together though, we are strong and at times, formidable!

Just five years ago 8 of us set out on this journey - a tiny acorn that has now grown firm roots and has definitely passed the sapling stage. We are not yet quite the mighty oak but are well on the way to achieving our ambition of becoming a Worshipful Company. I am amazed how quickly we have matured. We have an Archivist! We are about to appoint a Military Liaison Officer and will be applying for a Coat of Arms early next year. All things that in the early days seemed very grown up.

We have a very healthy Charitable Trust thanks to the work of the Trustees and the very generous benefactors who have enabled us to fulfil the important functions of providing benevolence and educational opportunities. Again, at the beginning this seemed a mountain to climb but here we are now and we have heard at the Annual Assembly just how much we are making a difference for members of our profession.

We have made our mark in a relatively short space of time. I was delighted when the Lord Mayor, at a meeting with fellow Masters in the early days of the pandemic, asked me to describe how the nurses undertake the ceremony of passing the Loving Cup. When we were first grappling with all the customs of Livery that we had to address we decided that to share drinking from a common cup was not quite right from a professional perspective. However, we recognised the significance and importance of this tradition and found a way that suited us as nurses by passing a lamp instead. We must have had a premonition of what was ahead of us and now other companies are considering how they will adapt this tradition of passing the Loving Cup to accommodate Covid rules.

We will continue to grow and develop, and I know that our Freemen will be the driving force behind our success as they always have been. We have been enjoying virtual social events recently and one of the positives of these is the chat function on Zoom. Who could imagine saying those words a year ago.

When nurses gather together there is a great deal of chat! - but face to face it is often difficult to speak to everyone and indeed we all have a lot to say, so a great deal gets lost. At a recent function, without any prompting, our Freemen started to ask each other through the chat box if there were any other Freemen in their locality. We have always known that we have Freemen from many regions across the UK and it became clear that there is an appetite for local gatherings. We will be looking at ways to facilitate this through the creation of a members directory - having thought about this for some time it was good to see that our Freemen felt the same way.

A key function of the Livery is to support the Lord Mayor and the ambitions that successive holders of that high office set out for their mayoral year. Our current Lord Mayor has encouraged us all to consider our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. Nursing is a diverse profession in many ways, and we are keen to ensure that we represent it as best we can. We believe that we are accessible and inclusive and will be paying particular attention to establishing a way of demonstrating this to ourselves and to the City.

How far we have come! It is thanks to the confidence placed in us by our Sponsoring Aldermen, Sir Andrew Parmley, and to the dedication and commitment of the Wardens, Court Assistants, Honorary Clerk, Committee members and Freemen that we are where we are. As an Honorary Freeman of the Company, Sir Andrew is one of the family and we very much appreciate him hot footing it down to London this evening to be nearer to us.

Fellowship, benevolence and education underpin all that we do as a Company, and I am so proud that we have made such progress in all of these areas.

I am also extremely grateful for the support and friendship that we have received from so many Companies and Guilds, some of which are represented this evening. I am delighted to welcome, as our honoured guests, the Masters of the Society of Apothecaries, the Worshipful Companies of Drapers', Spectacle Makers', Clockmakers' and Chartered Accountants', the Company of Entrepreneurs, and the Guild of Investment Managers. I am also delighted to welcome the Clerks to those Companies. Thank you so much for joining us and I look forward to meeting you all during my year as Master.

Last, but definitely not least, I would like to welcome Alderman Vincent Keaveny and his wife Amanda who is also here in her own right as a Freeman of the Company of Nurses. I am so pleased that Vincent has agreed to respond to this toast this evening and am honoured that you have included my installation in your busy schedule.

Vincent was born in Dublin and completed his education there at school and then University. He studied law and was called to the Irish Bar in 1988. He has lived and worked in London since 1989 and has worked within the banking and finance sector as a lawyer and served as President of the City of London Law Society in 2014/15.

Vincent was elected as Alderman for the Ward of Farringdon Within in 2013 and is Senior Patron of the Farringdon Ward Club. He has served on numerous Committees within the City of London Corporation and holds senior positions across a range of organisations.

He served as Master of the City of London Solicitors' Company in 2014/15 and Under Warden of the Woolmen's Company. He is a Liveryman of the Distillers' Company and also of the Spectacle Makers' Company and a member of the City Livery Club. With such a background it is no surprise that he is in line to become our next Lord Mayor – subject, of course, to him being elected at Common Hall in September.

Most importantly, if all goes well, the next Lady Mayoress will be a nurse. Amanda's nursing speciality was in intensive care/high dependency and we are so pleased that she is also a Freeman of this Company.

Thank you both for being with us this evening, and please be assured that we will do everything we can to support you during your Mayoral year.

So without more ado, I would like all my fellow Freemen to raise your glasses and join me in drinking a toast to our guests.