

Speech for Installation banquet 10th May 2019

Ladies and gentlemen/Wardens, Honoured guests and of course, fellow Freemen of the Guild of Nurses. As the third Master of the Guild, I offer you all a very warm welcome.

I must say a huge thank you to Murray for his most excellent and entertaining speech. The ever practical nurses have commissioned umbrellas for rainy days. Although it is/not wet this evening please accept one with our best wishes.

As the late great stand-up comedian Jeremy Hardy once said and I quote: "there are only 2 really important jobs in this world – those of binmen and nurses." I don't know how many binmen there are here tonight but I do know that there are a lot of wonderful nurses!

I am not only proud to call myself a nurse, but I am also proud to be a lifetime foundation freeman and one of the eight Founders of the Guild of Nurses.

As we come together this evening in these delightful surroundings, we celebrate another year of success for the Guild, and look forward to our journey together as we move towards becoming a Company without Livery. All of us, Founders, Freemen and members - stand together with the future of The Guild in our hands.....

.....And during my year as Master, I hope to inspire us all to continue to support and promote the noble profession of nursing - and to confirm our commitment to the Guild.

To demonstrate our shared learning, our fellowship, our caring, we have passed the nurses lamp between us. This is now an important and respected tradition of the Guild of Nurses and one that will endure. Together we share the emotional security that comes from looking back and feeling that we have been a part of something in our lives – nurses certainly know what it is like to work as a team and to make a difference to others. But another important source of that sense of security comes from knowing that we have achieved something that will carry on long after we are gone.

As part of the Livery movement we are working together for a common goal, as part of a much bigger endeavour and we can be sure that what we have created will last for future generations.

Indeed, it is **longevity** that I would like us to think about this evening. Since the twelfth century the City Livery companies have supported the traditional professions of the City of London and the work of the Lord Mayor. As our sponsoring alderman reminded us recently, nurses have been working in this city for a millennium. The foundation of a Guild to celebrate the great Livery traditions of fellowship, generosity and service within nursing has been long overdue. We are extremely proud to be a part of this and we want to ensure our involvement in the City of London.. **in perpetuity.**

This is our chance to leave behind a lasting legacy for this remarkable profession. The commitment does not waiver – will not waiver – and together – as a team - the work goes on.

But there is another aspect of longevity that I would like us to consider. Nursing is still that rare occupation - a job for life – once a nurse, always a nurse. In this room tonight, we have those who have joined the Guild as apprentices, just starting on their careers and we must offer them our warmest congratulations! But also with us, we have nurses who qualified over 5 decades ago. I know that some have worked in the nursing profession every year since they qualified. That is over 50 years of dedication to the sick and those in need. So we must offer them our congratulations too! This is a unique aspect of our profession based Guild – nurses of all ages and from many different backgrounds come together for support, learning, advice and networking.

We talk of encouraging fellowship but really our ties go deeper than that. What we have, whenever and wherever we trained, is a strong bond of shared knowledge and experiences. We have all put in those long hard hours. We have all seen and had to do things that we would rather forget. We have held the hands of those coming into the world and those leaving it. And I am sure that you, like me, can still remember the names and faces of patients that you cared for and still feel pleasure at their recovery or sadness at their loss.

All of us, whether working or retired, remember our training and the discipline and values it gave us. And talking of which... I know that there is at least one person here tonight who has a linen room that she keeps in good order, but I want to ask the wonderful nurses here tonight..

...just how many of you still make a bed with the pillowcases facing away from the door?

One of the most important aspects of working within the Livery movement is that of service to others and I also want to celebrate the work of The Company of Nurses Charitable Trust Fund. I am very proud to be able to tell you that we have recently made our first sizeable charitable grants. Thanks to the Chantry-Robinson fund we are supporting community nurses in their work with the homeless, in partnership with the world renowned Queen's Nursing Institute. We are also extremely proud to support the professional development of talented nurses and midwives through the award of an annual leadership scholarship with the Florence Nightingale Foundation. The Trust is honoured to be in receipt of substantial funds made possible by the Nightingale Fellowship and this will be used for the benevolence of nurses in need.

I know that the Freeman of the Guild will want to give generously to their charity - to help those who have come before us and those who will take nursing into the future. A contribution to the Charitable Trust fund will make a real difference to its achievements and is a way to demonstrate commitment to the Guild. Whatever you give – large or small – we thank you.

Over the past 12 months, Freeman and members have helped in other ways. They have joined the various committees of volunteers, attended the education and professional development seminars, and enjoyed a varied social calendar. 2019 continues to bring new members and new developments and with another excellent educational conference planned for September and many social events, the Guild remains focused and busy. The Guild of Nurses is **about you**, it is for

you – and it has grown because of you. None of this would have happened without those who give of their time and work so hard behind the scenes.

I would like to finish by saying thank you to those who have made this evening such a success.

To the Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners' for allowing us the use of HQS Wellington tonight. To Alan Willis, Officer Commanding, The Light Cavalry Squadron for providing our guard of honour. You all look so wonderful. Thank you too to Mark Grove of Cook and Butler for his continuing support and for looking after us so well.

I must also thank our Honorable Clerk John Allen for all he does to help us and our Honorary Beadle Martin Whitehead for keeping us in line. Both have the unenviable task of sorting out a bunch of bossy nurses and we very much appreciate all you do for us. I am very pleased to tell you that The Revd Canon Charles Pickstone has agreed to act as Honorary Chaplain to the Guild for the year commencing May 2019. I am very grateful to him for his support – he brings valuable experience and I know that he will be a great help to me as Master. Charles will be conducting our annual Guild church service which is to be held in October.

Lastly, I know that you will all want to join me in thanking our charming and delightful Immediate Past Master, Helen Pickstone. It has been an honour and a privilege to act as your Upper Warden. Part of my role was to follow her gentle words of guidance and most of the time, it was easy. However, there was one instruction that I could not obey and so Helen, along with your Master's certificate, please do accept this small token of our esteem, with love and best wishes.

Thank you for coming here tonight and for making this such a special occasion. I hope that you all travel home safely and I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Elizabeth Turnbull
Master