

## My Lord Mayor, 1960 Transcript

1:22

The Lord Mayor of London, the 632nd holder of an office so ancient,

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that at least one of his predecessors has become the hero of a fairy story.

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The leader of a City so old, that it was probably a thriving center of commerce before the Roman Empire.

1:38

So old that it has no charter - only Royal Confirmations of rights and customs that it enjoyed before England had a King,

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or charters have been thought of.

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Like so much of the City's pageantry, the Lord Mayors Show has simply grown

2:02

But this City of London is no museum piece dreaming of past glories,

2:08

of the days when it taught all England the pattern of local government, indeed, of Parliament itself.

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But this is a modern City, a progressive City that still sets a pattern for others to emulate

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It is in the Guildhall that the new Lord Mayor's real duties begin,

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with the first meeting of the Court of Common Council. He is their head and chairman but

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the actual business of the meeting is conducted in his name by the Town Clerk

3:00

Oh Lord Direct Us, the traditional prayer and motto of the City

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The pomp and circumstance of this honorable court is only one side of the picture

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Behind the pageantry is an equally long established

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tradition that of a highly efficient and businesslike body of men whose collective

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experience that would be hard to equal. The blue gown Common Councilman led by the Chief Commoner

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are elected for one year. The red gowned Aldermen are elected for life by the Ward voters

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and not, as in other cities, by the Council. They are Justices of the Peace by virtue  
3:58

of their office, the only ones in Britain who can sit individually, and they also attend  
at

4:04

the Central Criminal Court. They meet as a Court of Aldermen for various municipal  
purposes and

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each presides at meetings within his own Ward and it's these three elements,  
Common Councilman

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Aldermen and the Lord Mayor himself, which embody the government of the City. A  
great City, and yet

4:23

within the vast area of Greater London the City itself is only a fraction more than one  
square mile

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A compact nerve center whose activity has felt all over Britain and all over the world  
4:41

There could be few human enterprises in it anywhere

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that have no links either direct or remote with a daily work of the half

4:48

million men and women who stream every morning into that historic square mile

5:07

But at night no other city in the world

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is so incredibly transformed. The half million become a bear 5,000

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5:42

The morning and back to business, the business for example of the 30 or more  
committees which

5:48

run the day-to-day work of the Corporation

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6:05

Roman London owed its importance to the fact that its site was

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the lowest practicable crossing of the Thames so the guardianship of London's  
bridge is perhaps

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the most ancient of the City's functions. Until the 18th century there was only London  
Bridge

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But London Bridge has now been joined by three other road bridges, Tower Bridge  
being the newest

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All four are owned and maintained by

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the Corporation and financed by the Bridge House Estates fund

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7:05

Twice in three centuries the City has been wholly or partially destroyed

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The Great Fire of 1666 wiped out four-fifths of the gable tangle that made up the Medieval

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walled city. Tragedy offered opportunity, the great Sir Christopher Wren drew up a

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plan that would have given London wide straight streets and a renaissance atmosphere but in the

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distress and chaos that followed the fire his plan was stillborn and London's maze of timber

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and plaster was merely replaced by another maze. This time of stone and brick for at least one

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lesson have been learned from the great disaster. All the same Wren did leave his mark on the City

7:46

Beautiful churches, some of which happily survived the second destruction, the Blitz and World War II

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Wren's great St. Paul's Cathedral looked down on acres of utter devastation this

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time, however, the City would not repeat the mistakes that frustrated

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Wren after the Great Fire. By 1947 the Corporation's reconstruction plan was

8:25

ready and was carried out as fast as national necessity would allow

8:42

The colored areas in this map, a schedule for complete rebuilding

8:47

The colors represent the phases of short and long term schemes up to the year 2005

8:59

So the City, while pleasuring its own history, looks actively to its future. First priority goes to the

9:08

spacious and efficient office blocks, designed for the pace and complexity of modern economic life

9:13

but the City is no longer content to hand over the night hours to the policeman, the caretakers and

9:19

the cats. The handsome Golden Lane Housing Estate is one of the first achievements of a plan which

9:26

without altering the City's basic character will double or treble its resident population and the

9:32

climax of this plan is a project that has captured the public imagination. The Barbican redevelopment

9:38

shown in this model, this £20,000,000 scheme envisages a complete community of more than 2,000

9:44

flats with elevated pedestrian walkways green spaces, a lake, theater, art gallery, shops garage

9:51

space and everything that makes for civilised living. A residential oasis within the City

10:03

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Few people realise that the Corporation owns

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and maintains land outside its own boundaries which total more than 10 times the area of the

10:26

City itself. The 6,000 acres of Epping Forest are the largest item on the list

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11:00

Of the half dozen other open spaces which the City holds in trust for the

11:04

nation Burnham Beeches is the best known. None of these open spaces is a charge on

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the City Wits. They were acquired and are maintained out of the City's Cash

11:15

A fund which comes from Corporate Lands, market tools and other incidental income

11:24

Sometimes for the public good, the City crosses its own frontiers in

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other spheres it may seem strangely jealous of those frontiers. For example the City of

11:35

London Police form an island inside the square mile working with but not under

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Scotland Yard but there's a reason for this independence. Historically the Watch  
11:46

has been organized by the citizens ever since London was London and practically  
the

11:52

City Police are a unique body because the City itself is unique. For example in the  
tremendous

11:57

wealth left almost unguarded at night and in the specialized commerce of certain  
areas

12:08

The City of London School for Girls is one of the four famous schools maintained out  
of the

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City's Cash. It will have a brand new home in the Barbican redevelopment although  
the

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Corporation runs these schools and has seats on the Boards of many others it is not,  
in law,

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a Local Education Authority. The Guildhall School of Music and Drama is also one of  
the four

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Next door to both of these is another on the list an old established boys public  
school

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The City of London School, the fourth is the City of London Freeman's School at  
Ashted. So in education to the City

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plays a leading role in supplementing the state educational system. The City's help is  
not only

12:49

given the people at the start of their lives. Isleden House, an old people's home in the  
Borough

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of Islington was acquired by the Corporation in 1953, a front door for each flat and a  
pleasant

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garden just beyond the back door helped to give the old people both privacy and  
companionship

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The City's health duties to extend far beyond the City

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borders, for the Port of London stretches nearly 70 miles from Teddington to the sea  
and its health is

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the responsibility of the City. The Hygeia, lying at Gravesend, provides for thousands of sailors

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every year their first contact with both City and port. For it is the Port Health Authorities

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duty to see that incoming vessels do not bring infectious diseases to London. A launch takes the

14:00

City's boarding medical officer from the Hygeia to visit a newly arrived merchantmen. It is the Masters

14:06

duty to present a Declaration of Health certifying that there has been no case of infectious sickness

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during the voyage, or if the has giving details. Discovered or suspected cases can be promptly

14:18

removed to hospital in an ambulance launch. The boarding medical officers job is no mere formality

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In fact it's full time work for many doctors and inspectors. By there round the clock vigilance they

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too are fulfilling the City's ancient function of national watchdog in the public interest

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There are many other City watch dogs at work in the port for it

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is not only people who disembark at London. Six and a half million tons

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of food of every possible kind are imported into London and it's the

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City's job to see that only what is fit for human consumption is allowed through

15:11

London probably began life as a trading post so the markets

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of London are as old as London itself. Smithfield a renowned marketplace since the

15:23

12th century concentrates on meat, poultry and provisions. Billingsgate is the eldest

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market belonging to the Corporation. It dates at least from the 10th century

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Spitalfields in Stepney is the most recently acquired or the Corporation's markets.

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The City bought it in 1901, fruit and vegetables are its specialty. To all these markets thousands of

15:53

tons of goods are brought every day and for the whole operation the City is landlord as well as

15:59

watchdog. The City's achievements in the health sphere would fill a library. Just one more example

16:06

It was the first City to become a smokeless zone in the country by Act of Common Council

16:11

before Parliament had passed a law on the subject. Watching the Cooperation on ceremonial occasions

16:19

few would guess at the endless day-to-day work its job of running the City involves but even the

16:26

ceremony is often of national significance. When foreign Heads of State come to Britain as guests

16:31

of the Sovereign a visit to the City is a regular feature of the program. On such occasions the Lord Mayor

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may be said to represent the citizens and local authorities of the whole of Britain

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The City has always paid this due row conscious that whatever it does affects

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the nation and this is true love merely of ceremony but also of its daily decisions

16:56

A thousand and one aspects of the City's life problems that stay within its boundaries and

17:01

others that reach far beyond all coming back to these men in the Guildhall

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Older than Kings, older than written history with roots older than Parliament

17:27

and yet always looking to tomorrow, this is the City, the ageless square mile governed the

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lead by the Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London in Common Council assembled

18:09