

**The Lord Mayor's speech at a Banquet in honour of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen – Wednesday 18 October 2023**

May it please Your Majesties.

Your Majesties. My Lords. Fellow Aldermen. Sheriffs. Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good evening, everyone.

It is my *great* honour to welcome Your Majesties to the City of London and to Mansion House this evening...

...to mark your Coronation and to celebrate the historic friendship between the City and the Crown.

On behalf of all at the City of London Corporation, may I echo the Senior Grecian's warm sentiments of loyal greetings...delivered with such eloquence.

--

Before I begin, I want to reflect, briefly, on the suffering of innocent civilians - particularly children - caught up in the horrific events unfolding in the Middle East. My thoughts, and, I'm sure those of all of us here, are with them.

--

Your Majesty,

Earlier this evening on your arrival in the City I formally surrendered the City's treasured Pearl Sword to you...

...and you graciously returned it to me, in a time-worn ceremony that is first recorded in the reign of King Richard II in 1392.

This simple, but symbolic, exchange expresses the profound connection between the City and its Sovereign...and is particularly associated with the first entry of a monarch into the City following a Coronation.

This is not empty ceremony. In surrendering the Pearl Sword - given to us by Queen Elizabeth I in the sixteenth century - I shed the authority that I exercise here in the Square Mile on Your Majesty's behalf.

And, in touching the hilt and returning the Sword to me, Your Majesty reaffirmed that authority and the privileged relationship that the City enjoys with the Crown.

We greatly value this opportunity to reassert our ongoing loyalty in your Coronation year.

--

Your Majesty,

The City is a place where your mother, our beloved Queen Elizabeth II, was a not infrequent visitor. Indeed, she participated in three Pearl Sword ceremonies over the course of her reign.

At an 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in this very room, she played down the occasion with characteristic humour...

Quoting Groucho Marx, she said: "Anyone can get old - all you have to do is to live long enough."

The relationship between City and Crown is a long one.

But to echo Her Late Majesty...it is not the longevity of the link that matters, but rather its *closeness...strength...and impact*.

--

On that note --

Your Majesties, I want to take this opportunity to say what an *honour* it was to be invited to represent the City on the day of your Coronation - which managed to speak to the past, while reflecting contemporary British life.

I wore the same robe donned by my predecessor in 1953 - which is on display in the Salon this evening - and carried the precious Crystal Sceptre presented to the City by Henry V after his victory at Agincourt in 1415.

My attire caused not a little amusement at the entrance of the Abbey, with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dean of Westminster remarking:

“Oh, here’s the Lord Mayor of London...outdressing us as usual!”

--

The Royal Family have been great supporters of the livery and other City institutions...

Thank you, Your Majesty, for your patronage of both the London Museum and Barts Heritage, during an exciting period of renewal for one of the City’s most historic quarters.

Your Majesty, you have connections with a wide range of companies - so many of whom are represented here tonight.

While you, Your Majesty, are an Honorary Liveryman of the Joiners and Ceilers, the Plaisterers, the Plumbers and a Liveryman of the Vintners.

After attempting home improvements, I too need a glass of wine!

The City Corporation and livery companies were delighted to be able to demonstrate our appreciation for Your Majesties, by gifting the anointing screen used in the most sacred part of the coronation ceremony...which is on display in the Salon tonight.

I would like to thank the livery for throwing their weight behind this special project...

...and the Carpenters, Broderers, Drapers, and Weavers in particular for their craftsmanship, alongside the project team and the Royal School of Needlework.

I also want to recognise the Girdlers for gifting His Majesty the beautiful “stole royal” used during the ceremony...as they have done for the last four Coronations.

And I *must* thank the Goldsmiths’ Company, who - in addition to gifting the buckles for your Coronation Slippers, and leading on a historic commission of a new processional cross, “The Cross of Wales” - have produced *this spectacular* “Coronation Cup”...

...which is engraved with the Royal Arms and the Arms of the City of London, reflecting our historic ties...

...and is designed to complement the cup produced for Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, which we are also lucky to have here tonight.

--

I think one of the reasons why the City and the Crown enjoy such a deep relationship is because you have always recognised the unique role the City of London plays in the UK...and because we *share* your core values and aspirations for the nation.

Our City is unlike anywhere else in the world...distilling the very best of British ingenuity, industry, culture and community in 1.12 square miles.

Our financial and professional services sector is the *backbone* of the UK economy...

...providing and allocating the capital to support industry around the country, employing more than *2.5 million* people, and generating over *12% of our economic output*.

Wherever I've travelled around the world, my reception has been warm and the feedback consistent.

London is universally regarded as the pre-eminent international global financial centre, with a world-leading legal and regulatory system and unparalleled breadth and depth of talent and innovation.

Our success is underpinned by your promotion of the UK on the world stage, Your Majesty, and by the stability that our constitutional monarchy provides, in peaceful and in turbulent times.

And may I congratulate you on your recent triumphant visits to Germany and to France.

We will continue to rely on your support as we pursue our Vision for Economic Growth,

-- the City's new, long-term strategy to ensure that we can keep driving economic growth and retain our pre-eminent position.

The City has survived so long because it is resilient.

It has prospered because it is resourceful.

But it is, and will be, sustainable in this new era because it is *responsible*. And it is this last point that I want to expand upon briefly now.

My theme for my mayoral year, Financing our Future, has focused on how we can use the City's formidable strengths to *build a better, brighter future* for people at home and abroad.

There *is* no mission more pressing than tackling climate change and biodiversity loss,

-- a matter that has *long* been close to your heart, Your Majesty.

I'm proud to say that...as UK institutions have helped to set the agenda on tackling climate change...the City has established itself as a one-stop-shop for green and transition finance...

At the forefront of shaping sustainable infrastructure projects - such as the work we are doing with India...

And developing new financial products - such as the high integrity voluntary carbon markets that the London Stock Exchange is working on - to ensure a *fair transition* that supports the Global South.

Through the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy, we are working towards a target of net zero across our own operations by 2027...and the wider Square Mile by 2040.

-- we're doing our bit to achieve that goal by using renewable energy from a solar farm in Dorset to power landmarks like the Barbican Centre and Tower Bridge.

Elsewhere, the Livery Climate Action Group is helping reduce emissions across the livery and their associated industries.

Meanwhile, Pollinating London Together is raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity in the City.

On that note, you may be interested to know that this building harbours a sustainable secret...

Our beehives - situated on the roof above us - produced their *largest ever* honey crop this year.

It's not quite Duchy Organic, but it is still pretty good.

--

Continuing on that theme of "responsibility" - to society, to the world...

Your Majesty, I know you are a great supporter of efforts to promote literacy...

...launching The Queen's Reading Room to provide opportunities for the appreciation of literature among adults and children in the UK and around the world.

...and acting as patron of the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, for which the Chair of the City Corporation's Education Board, Caroline Haines, was delighted to be invited to be the Senior Lead Judge this year.

Financial literacy is also so important.

At a time where half of working adults in the UK have the numeracy skills of a primary school child, I'm pleased to have been able to shine a spotlight on the work being done in the City to improve financial literacy, numeracy and financial inclusion...

And, last week, at a dinner with the Archbishop of Canterbury, I set out a series of recommendations for industry and government from the Financial Literacy and Inclusion Steering Group - including a call to make financial education statutory for Key Stage 1 and 2 students.

So, I must say, also, Your Majesty, that I was pleased to see that coins commissioned to mark your reign feature large numbers...designed to help children identify figures and learn to count.

--

Finally, it is my pleasure to present Your Majesties with this embroidered memento...made by the team that produced the Anointing Screen...which depicts the top section of the tree and dove motif...

...and will, I hope, act as a reminder - if any were needed - of that sacred part of that special day in May.

--

Your Majesties,

Though monarchs - and, far more frequently - Lord Mayors change, the close connection between City and Crown *endures*...

We know that your care for the wellbeing of our nation *also* endures.

If I may say so, your promotion and protection of our national *values* provide a vital fixed point around which our country's *activities* can orbit, for the benefit of us all.

That is why we are so deeply honoured to have you both here tonight...

...and that is why we are so grateful for all you both do in support of the City of London.

May your reign be *happy* and *glorious*.

***“The King and Queen”.***