

This note is one of a series placed in the Almanac for the guidance of livery masters, wardens, and their clerks, especially new ones, seeking advice on a particular topic. They are not prescriptive, and how individual companies choose to conduct their affairs is, of course, entirely up to them. Most are written by a past chairman of the Livery Committee, of whom you may read more at the foot of the Contact page.

Allocution (sometimes termed the Preamble)

The form of words traditionally used by speakers at livery/City dinners (and elsewhere) at the start of their speech.

Always start with host –

Master/wardens (president/chairman) Then

(My) Lord Mayor

Your Grace – (*bishops etc*)

Your Excellencies – (*ambassadors and high commissioners etc*)

My Lord(s)

Mr/Madam Alderman *or* Aldermen

Mr/Madam Sheriff *or* Sheriffs

Ladies & Gentlemen

Overly long lists are neither funny nor clever (though some speech makers think they are, but they are hardly the first to make the “joke”). The more you list, the more chance of causing offence by leaving someone out!

Avoid “fellow liverymen”, “visiting masters”, and other functionaries.

However, if the guest of honour/principle speaker does not fall into one of the categories above, the person making the speech of welcome/introduction to him/her may include them by name/title immediately before Ladies & Gentlemen, if wished.

In summary, shorter is better, and confirmation of this is given in *Debretts Correct Form* (p.298) [for details of the book, go to the Library page on this website].

It is NOT necessary to slavishly repeat the entire allocution again and again!

A good toastmaster should know the same thing.

If royalty attending, seek advice.

Loyal Toasts require NO introduction or preamble. The toastmaster/beadle should simply gavel firmly for silence. Detailed guidance on Toasts is given at a separate page.

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Was this note helpful? Do you have comment? Email nrpullman@btinternet.com