

**Liberation Day
Bailiff's Remarks
Thursday 9th May 2024**

Your Excellency, Chief Minister, esteemed guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted to welcome you all on this 79th anniversary of Jersey's Liberation from German occupation.

I am also delighted to welcome a regular visitor to us on Liberation Day – Mayor Reed Gusciora, of Trenton, New Jersey with which St Helier is twinned. I also warmly welcome the Right Honourable Lord Pickles here with us today in his capacity as special envoy for post holocaust issues.

We once again mark Jersey's national day in Liberation Square with friends and family. Liberation Day is Jersey's national day. And even though, as time goes on, those with direct memories of Liberation may no longer be with us in person, the importance of Liberation Day will continue, renewed and be kept alive by new generations of Jersey people because it is the celebration not only of the Liberation of Jersey in 1945 but is also of who we are as a people and as a community. The spirit of those who were present through occupation and liberation remains in and informs Jersey today.

You have already heard in the speech that the Chief Minister gave in the States Assembly a short while ago many of the stories and anecdotes that have come down through his family. These stories are important to hear, to remind ourselves and future generations of this part of our wider island story.

The 9th May is a day that gives us occasion to remember the triumph of freedom over tyranny and the spirit of resilience that is so much a part of Jersey.

This year, one of the themes of Liberation Day is the importance of service and we honour the memory of those who fought in the name of freedom for us in the Second World War.

The freedoms we enjoy today could not have happened if men and women had not put on uniforms and put themselves in harm's way to fight for a greater cause.

That was service of the highest order but to a very great extent I believe so much about this Island today is built on a spirit of service. It is perhaps easy for us to recognise community and service when times are dark and we are facing challenges as we have in the recent past with the pandemic and the tragedies such as Haut du Mont and more recently the depredations of Storm Ciaran, but we live in a place of constant service and community.

Men and women did not only put on uniforms in the Second World War but they continue to do so today. They do it in the military but they do it in civilian life and they take on tough jobs. The emergency services – the police, ambulance, fire, coastguard, lifeboat crews, first aid, health and care workers – those too are examples of service to be recognised and valued.

So many other vocational roles - in education, religion, and conservation to name just a few - underpin island life.

Honorary service is deeply embedded into Jersey life and the parochial system of which we may be very proud indeed depends upon honorary service for its life blood. That is a quintessentially Jersey thing – honorary service – and our community in all its parts is so much the richer for it.

Those also who work in the charitable sector and who give up that most valuable commodity – their time – to help and support others by volunteering, often in a quiet way without any thought of recognition, so that the lives of people in need are made better. Jersey has an enormously rich tradition of charitable and voluntary work. So many volunteers are here today to help us celebrate.

We should also value those who are quietly and patiently caring for loved ones at home, who do not seek reward but whose help and kindness is key to the lives of others.

And service is to be found in the attitude of someone who seeks to do a good job and has pride in the product, the way in which they supply it, the way they interact with those who benefit from their work. All this dignifies our lives and our community.

So from our frontline workers, who serve to keep us safe, to the volunteers who lend a helping hand to those in need, to those wherever they are from who would not consider themselves as anything out of the ordinary, but who all embody the spirit of community in their everyday lives – each act of service, no matter how small, contributes to our community and strengthens the bonds that unite us.

Times change but there is a timeless quality to a welcoming smile, a kind word, a helping hand, and courtesy which links us all.

On a lighter note, even our traffic system has a unique filter in turn rule that relies upon taking turns and courtesy to keep the island moving!

Next month we will come together on 6th June to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day and honour those who joined in the Normandy landings. And later this year we will commemorate the arrival of the SS Vega which provided a lifeline of Red Cross parcels to the Island and acted as a beacon of hope after many months of terrible hardship.

I was saddened to hear of the passing of Enid de Gruchy, it was her story of receiving a sweet from a soldier on board the SS Vega that inspired her granddaughter, Emma Le Gallais, to create the logo of a

soldier giving a sweet to a child which is used when sharing our Liberation day story. Enid said:

“It’s an amazing symbol of being given a gift. It is not just a sweet, it’s the gift of freedom that we need to look after and appreciate. We need to appreciate the sacrifices that were made for us.”

True words, and perfect for this day.

I very much hope that you enjoy the rest of the events today and have a most joyful and happy Liberation Day 2024. Next year of course we have the 80th anniversary of Liberation and I know that, too, will be very special.

Thank you for being here and I look forward to many Liberation Days to come. A la prochain.