

A Toast to the City of Stirling

proposed at the Burns Supper of the Master Court of the Incorporation of
Hammermen, August 30 2019.

Guid freends, fowk often find us gazin'
At Stirling toon - that sight amazin'-
Wi' selfie-snappin' tourists praisin'
Its strength and beauty;
And soon oor glaisses we ll be raisin'-
A happy duty!

Ere time began the great First Cause -
As history maist plainly shaws -
Grantit tae Scotland land and laws,
Wi' pipes and drummers.
Their playing gains bemused applause
Frae farflung comers.

High on a crag the Castle rose,
[A stronghold famed in verse and prose]
Where battling Stuart monarchs chose
To feast in glory;
James eftir James - but I propose
Anither story:

Where did oor the heroes get the gear -
The helmet, breastplate, sword and spear
That made the English flee in fear,
Tae think again?
In Stirling toon - the forge was near.
The Hammermen!

As shining ploughshares sliced the soil
[A timorous moose's nest tae spoil]
They helped the seed tae grow and foil
Famine's grim plan -
Thanks tae which hardy son o toil?
The Hammerman!

Their task was hard: the day was lang,
But still the hammers swung and rang
In tune with Scotland's ancient sang.
The furnace flamed.
Let's bless all Trades- the vanished gang,
Named and unnamed.

The Kirk o' Haly Rude stands fast
Proclaiming Stirling's glorious past.
The Tolbooth tower was built tae last
In future ages;
Proof against time's unwelcome blast.
Exciting pages

Of Cooncil records will reveal
That truth seals mony a tricky deal,
Keeps progress on an even keel,
And built The Peak;
Altho' the pool - we'll no' conceal
It - sprang a leak.

Had I mair time, I'd interview
Each guest - that's you and you and you -
Recording stories auld and new
O' work weel done:
O' faithful service ringing true
Through grief - and fun.

Guid freends arise, wi' glaiss in hand,
Tae hail the toon whae's glories grand
Exceed all skills that bards command
In ode or ditty,
And toast the hert o' Alba's land:
Tae Stirling City!