



Liverymen and Freemen's Guide for Guests

The City of London is an historic place with many traditions. The Clerk regularly receives requests for advice from members of the Worshipful Company regarding issues of protocol and procedure within the Worshipful Company and at events. The answers to the most frequently asked questions are listed below. Should you require further clarification or explanation please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk clerk@companyofnurses.co.uk

Dress

Please refer to the specific dress code guidance that is provided on Company, City of London and other invitations.

Black Tie

Traditionally, black tie means dinner jacket and bow tie. For ladies a long dress, a short evening or cocktail dress, evening skirt or evening trousers are appropriate. Shoulders should be covered.

White Tie (also called Evening Dress)

White tie is worn on more formal occasions particularly in the presence of the Lord Mayor.

For men this consists of a black tail coat, matching trousers, black shoes, white waistcoat, white evening shirt with winged collar, and white bow tie. Ladies should wear a long evening dress, long evening skirt or evening trousers, shoulders should be covered.

Morning Dress - Formal daytime events (e.g. United Guilds Service)

Morning dress is the traditional option for men at City events (tail coat and striped trousers).

Hats for ladies are encouraged, although not after 6pm.

Uniforms

Formal National Dress may be worn and Mess Dress is encouraged for Company of Nurses' Dinners.

Decorations

Decorations, Company of Nurses badge and Nurse Training School badges are encouraged.

The Dinner

Receiving Line

On arrival, guests will be announced by the Beadle and will greet the Master and Wardens. A nod or bow is acceptable instead of shaking hands.

Procession

Once the proceedings are announced by the Toastmaster all should take their places as soon as possible. To avoid delay please check the seating plan beforehand. To assist catering staff with dietary requirements please ensure the seating plan is always followed.

The Master, principal guest(s), Wardens, Honorary Chaplain (or Master's Chaplain if present) and the Clerk process into the dining room led by the Beadle. Freemen and guests stand at their places and clap, in a slow rhythm.

Grace

Please stand while Grace is said either by the Honorary Chaplain, Master's Chaplain if present, or by the Clerk.

The Meal

The Master, as host, is the first to start eating each course. Food and wine are served only by the catering staff; guests should not help themselves.

Traditionally you are expected to remain seated at the table until after the Loyal Toast (the toast to The King). Whilst there is no official comfort break the most convenient time to leave the table, if it is necessary, is when coffee is being served making sure that you are back before the speeches. You should leave and return to your seat as discreetly as possible, by the shortest possible route and without going behind the top table.

Port

If port is served, please pass the decanter to the left when it reaches you after topping up your own glass if desired.

The Blessing of the Lamp

In observing the spirit of the tradition of the City of London in the passing a Loving Cup, the Worshipful Company of Nurses pass the Nurse's Lamp as a symbol of unity, trust and fellowship. The Lamp is blessed by the Honorary Chaplain or the Master's Chaplain if present.

The Passing of the Lamp

The Lamp starts its journey from the Master. When the Lamp reaches your neighbour, you should stand and bow to each other. You should take the Lamp from your neighbour, and holding it aloft, bow to your neighbour again. You should then turn to your other neighbour and the process is repeated. After passing the Lamp, remain standing and turn around to protect your neighbour's back so that three people are standing at one time. As the Lamp is passed to the next person, you may then sit down.

The Toasts and Speeches

The formal toasts will be listed on the menu card. In all cases the Beadle calls for silence. Guests should sit down in between each toast and not remain standing in anticipation of other toasts to follow. Part of the courtesy of the toast is that all diners rise for it.

During the speeches it is accepted courtesy to remain seated and silent.

The Loyal Toast is proposed by the Master. The Master rises, says “The King”. All rise and stand to attention, the music starts immediately and all sing the first verse of the National Anthem. Glasses are not lifted until the singing ends. Everyone toasts “The King”. All then sit down.

The Royal Family. The Master will then propose the toast to The Royal Family. All will rise. If there are musicians present then they will play the first half of the National Anthem but there will be no singing. Everyone toasts “The Royal Family”. All then sit down.

The Civic Toast. The Master rises and says “The Lord Mayor and the City of London Corporation”. All will rise and raise their glasses saying those same words. All then sit down.

The Guests. This toast is proposed by a member of the Company, who first makes a short speech of welcome, saying a few words about the principal guests. He/she will then invite the Company to rise, say “The Guests” and all Worshipful Company of Nurses Liverymen and Freemen rise, raise glasses, repeat “The Guests” and drink, then sit down.

The Company. This is proposed by the principal guest, who first makes a short speech. When he/she has finished they will propose the toast to “The Worshipful Company of Nurses, may it flourish root and branch forever coupled with the name of the Master”. At which point all present, except the Master, will stand, raise glasses and say “The Worshipful Company”, drink and then sit down.

Master’s Speech

The Master will give a short speech in response.

Procession out of the Dining Hall

The Beadle will announce the retirement of the Master and Principal Guests. All present will stand and clap in a slow rhythm while the procession departs.

Stirrup Cup

A “stirrup cup” is sometimes served in an adjoining reception room after the formal dinner. This is an opportunity for Liverymen, Freemen and their guests to have a parting drink and is the perfect time to greet friends, meet new guests and acquaintances away from the dining table.

Leaving

Departure should not be delayed as most Halls now apply severe charges if the Company remains after the appointed hour – usually 10.45pm. This time will be listed on the invitation or “pour memoire” as “Carriages at”.

Smoking

The smoking of tobacco or e-cigarettes are not permitted inside any Hall.

Mobile Telephones

Please ensure that all mobile telephones and similar electronic devices are on silent. We do understand that there may be exceptional circumstances when a phone may need to be checked, however continued use at table and the taking of photographs is positively discouraged.