

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.

Badges

This note sets out some suggested guidelines about the wearing of livery badges, as usually worn by masters, wardens, and other officers of the company.

Within the wearers' own hall, or at his/her own event

Clearly this is a matter for the custom and practice of the livery company in question. As a general guide, it might be considered appropriate to wear badges at formal events (court meetings, dinners etc), but perhaps not so for more informal eg committee meetings, other than maybe the Master. But each livery will have its own preference.

When visiting elsewhere as a guest

Here the "rules" are pretty straightforward. Firstly, it is up to the host organisation as to whether it is a "badge" occasion; and if the answer to that is Yes, then Q2 is: has the guest been invited in their badge wearing capacity? If the answer is again Yes, then wearing the badge is appropriate.

So eg if the guest is a warden of xxx livery, and has been invited for that reason, then he/she may/should wear the badge. BUT if invited simply as a friend of a member of xxx livery, then they should not.

A frequent and pragmatic exception to this rule is when a **master** is invited to a livery dinner as a personal guest, not in their formal capacity as the master. Following the rules above, he/she should not wear their badge. But often the preferred option then is for the host liveryman to speak with the host clerk, and agree to consider the guest master to be "official" and hence wear their badge.

Some livery companies will be happy to take a more relaxed view about all this, and content to welcome any guest wearing their badge of office regardless of the capacity in which they are present. Some would agree that this does not greatly matter, and life will go on. Others may take a stricter view.

Non livery events within the City

There will be occasion when livery badges are appropriately worn at non livery events. But these will generally be rare, and it will be up to the host organisation to give guidance, and in most cases would be restricted to only the master. It is seldom likely to be appropriate at business style occasions, unless specifically related to the trade/profession of the livery company.

Livery events outside the City

Livery masters frequently gather outside the City walls, two obvious examples being BP Garden Parties, and the Ironbridge weekend – at both of which (and many others), badges are routinely worn. There will be myriad other occasions when masters

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venture forth, with badges, representing their company: visiting military affiliations being an example. There is no rule, of which this writer is aware, that dictates this to be inappropriate. As with all the above, a degree of pragmatism and common sense will guide you in most situations.

Representing the Master

For practical reasons, if no other, it is probably sensible for eg a warden, to wear their own badge, even if representing the master. In very exceptional circumstances (as with LM locum tenens) at an important high profile event, it may be appropriate for the person representing the master to be badged accordingly, but this would be rare, and as with all the above, up to the custom of that livery, and the host organisation.

Liveryman pin badges etc

Some companies encourage their members to wear an identifying symbol (or ladies' brooch). Generally speaking these are small discreet items, and hence their use is unlikely to cause concern. But the principles above would apply, and once again it is up to the custom of the livery in question.

Name badges

These are becoming increasingly popular, and many would consider very helpful. But in this writer's view, are not appropriately worn at formal black tie events.

Photos of masters' badges

There is a facility to post photos at the Livery Companies Database, and a good quality photo there is helpful to others in identifying masters.

Masters' Badges of the City of London Livery Companies

A book by Richard Goddard ISBN 9781860777271

Medals and Decorations

There is a link to the British Legion's guidance on the wearing of military medals etc elsewhere in this Almanac, and also a separate note on Decorations.

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Livery Committee

11th March 2016

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