

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.

Lord Mayor's Show Guard of Honour

It has become the happy custom that at the end of the Lord Mayor's Show (LMS) a Guard of Honour is formed outside Mansion House to welcome the new Lord Mayor (LM) after they have alighted from their coach.

The Guard is formed of 22 aldermen, and a matching number of livery masters/prime wardens. **This note is written for the benefit of those masters invited to be one of the 22.** They will be first chosen from the mother companies of the LM and sheriffs, and then from the four of the Great 12 who take part in the Show by rotation. The remaining 15 will usually be invited from companies participating in the parade.

From this it will be seen that the master's active participation in the LMS, either on a company float, or in a carriage, need not preclude him/her from forming part of the Guard. Quite the contrary. The LM coach is invariably right at the end of the procession, so it is certain that all other participants will have reached Mansion House before the new LM.

In August, the Chairman of the Livery Committee will email an invitation to the clerks of the chosen 22 asking if their master would like to take part. Substitutes are not accepted. Lunch follows the Guard, to which spouses and partners are also invited. So their full names (eg Mrs Sue Smith OBE) are also needed. A prompt response is requested, as the list has to be passed to Mansion House for them to prepare invitations and seating.

Formal invitations to watch the **Return** Procession, followed by the second sitting of lunch at Mansion House are sent out from Mansion House in October (ie after the election of the new LM on 29th September). A pavement seat will be allocated to your spouse/guest, and to you if you are not in the Show (though you will probably have a standing ticket).

Upon your acceptance of that invitation, you will also receive (from Mansion House) your admission badge, and a brief card giving timings etc for *all* guests (ie not especially those in the Guard of Honour). It is known that many of you will not be actually watching the Show, as you will be in it!

You fall into two groups: those who are partaking in the procession, and those who are not.

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Timings

First – for those not in the procession:

Your invitation is for 12.30pm, and there will be a coffee/drinks reception inside Mansion House for you and your guest (in the Ballroom on the second floor). At about 1 o'clock everyone will be asked to take their places outside to watch the Show. It is likely that your guest/spouse will have an allocated seat on the pavement level – you will have a standing place.

Between 2 o'clock and 2.15pm Masters/Prime Wardens please make your way to Walbrook (ie the road in front of the entrance to Mansion House which is normally used) where a member of the Livery Committee will await you under the glass canopy on the East side of Walbrook.

Soon after 2.20pm, suitably marshalled, we shall “march” round to the front of the grandstand, in Mansion House Square, where we shall greet the Lord Mayor, who is due to arrive at 2.40pm.

Thereafter lunch, having somehow re-teamed up with your guest (be warned, it is all a bit of a scrummage, there is no seating plan, and you simply find your places at a table).

For those who are in the procession:

Your spouse/guest attends the drinks reception from 12.30pm as above.

Your carriage/float will be ahead of the Lord Mayor's Carriage. Those in carriages will be brought to Walbrook for you to alight. For those on floats, you should arrange to leave it, as convenient, in the vicinity of Mansion House. Do not try to do so (I suggest) in Mansion House Square (thus bringing everything to a halt right under the grandstand) but either just short of Walbrook (in Queen Victoria Street), or after it in Prince's Street (by when the procession is officially over, but you will have to navigate back across Mansion House Square to Walbrook – to meet there, please, before 2.15pm, or asap thereafter).

From then on, as above.

Lunch is not an especially long affair – and very informal. You are free to leave as you wish.

Dress. Masters should wear their gowns and badges, and hats/bonnets as they wish. Ladies dress is reasonably formal, and some will wear hats. But warmth and comfort for sitting outside on a November day may be an over-riding concern. With many hundreds of guests for lunch, you, or your consort/spouse, need not concern themselves unduly on the appropriate dress code.

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NOTE – there are NO formal arrangements to dispose of your gowns etc twixt Guard and Lunch. You may either hang them in the Mansion House cloak room, coat racks, or arrange for your Beadle to meet you in Walbrook at about 2.45pm to take it off you.

It is above all a FUN day, and though this note is necessarily detailed, it should not detract from that fact. Enjoy!

Nigel R Pullman

1st August 2015 (with minor amendments to October 2019)

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