

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.

## Decorations – when to wear

### Introduction

Elsewhere in the *Dinners & Protocol* folder of this website is a link to the Royal British Legion advice on the wearing of medals. *Debrett's Correct Form* also gives interesting guidance (p.303 of the 1999 edition). There is also a note about when to wear Livery Badges (of office) in this Almanac.

But this note simply addresses the different issue of: **When should the host (livery company) specify that the (usually) dinner is to be an occasion when guests are asked to wear “Decorations”**.

As in all else, the Clerk will be guided by their company's precedent, and custom & practice.

### Guidance

But a new clerk, or maybe a new company, may seek guidance, where no precedent is apparent.

He/she has the option of Always, Never, or Sometimes. The first two have obvious attractions, but the third is probably the correct one. Those with decorations (esp significant ones e.g. Orders of the British Empire) may understandably welcome the opportunity to wear their gong, and formal livery dinners are one of the relatively rare occasions when they can properly do so.

But NOT at every dinner. (Decorations are seldom specified at lunch, nor at a formal morning coat event).

So, when? White tie dinners would be an obvious event to specify Decorations. If the company never wears evening dress, then at the major Civic dinner (with LM) is another. If the company has an annual dinner to which they regularly invite their service affiliates etc, that too could be an occasion for decorations and medals (miniatures).

### What do we mean by Decorations?

Usually the neck mounted ribbons of the more senior honours (CBE etc), and campaign medal etc miniatures for typically (ex) armed services personnel. Those entitled to wear the various orders of chivalry (*not this writer*) will know the rules. But many would say that only one neck ribbon looks sensible, so eg a master with his/her badge, but also the holder

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of, say, a CBE, would be best advised to wear the CBE medal ribbon on the left chest, rather than the neck version.

## **Invitation**

The formal invitation card will state ‘Decorations’ as appropriate, beneath the specified Dress code. If none are expected, there is no need to say so. [Conversely, if a livery dinner is, unusually, one where badges of office are *not* expected to be worn, it would be helpful to say so.]

## **Garden of Remembrance Service**

This annual service at St Paul’s in November is described in a note in the *Church, Sport, Trade* folder of this Almanac.

But it is a rare livery occasion when full sized medals are usually worn by all those in attendance.

## **Tiaras**

A final quote from Debrett – ‘*Decorations*’ is also the cue for women to wear their most important jewellery, including . . . . tiaras. But it may be worth remembering that this was written nearly 20 years ago, and even at State Banquets, few tiaras are nowadays in evidence.

Nigel R Pullman

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