

This note is one of a series placed in the Clerks' Almanac by the Livery Committee. Most are written by its chairman, of whom you may read more at the foot of the [Contact page](#). They are intended to be of guidance to livery clerks, especially new ones, or those 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.

Official Photography at Livery dinners (and other events)

This note relates to the use and control of professional photographers at livery events. It does not attempt to give guidance on the prevalence of mobile phone use during formal livery dinners, which is sadly becoming ubiquitous.

Whilst it is certainly not necessary to employ professional photographers at all livery dinners and functions, in many companies it is the practice to do so, and no doubt the master's preference that his/her big event is recorded for posterity!

Formal VIP photos

Some photographers can make something of a meal of this task, and delay or disrupt the proceedings. Careful planning and briefing will help things run smoothly.

Typically, the formal group photographs will be taken of the VIPs immediately after dinner is announced, whilst the livery move into the Hall and take their places. If this scenario is followed, then it is sensible to ensure that all whose photo you want are in the procession, and any processing whose photo you do not want, question whether they should be in the procession at all?

Nominated hosts can be briefed to ensure that their VIP guest knows that they are processing, AND where to go, promptly, to have the photos taken.

It should be the Clerk's job to coordinate the photo call, NOT the photographer, beadle (unless well briefed by his clerk), nor even the master. The Clerk would be wise to write down who is to be in which photo, and who is to stand where (once written, this template will serve for all future events). A way of doing this is to start with, say, Master and guest of honour. Then add wardens, then maybe include consorts, then others. It is diplomatic to ensure that all in the procession get included eventually! Don't forget the chaplain. Clerks may be best left out of photos.

If the master wishes to use the opportunity to have a family portrait taken, then this is preferably done separately before the receiving line is formed.

Photos of award winners

Good professional photographers do this task discretely and quickly. Others take over the proceedings. As ever at livery events, time is the enemy, and the other diners are probably not terribly interested whilst award winners are photographed. A solution may be to re-enact the presentations AFTER dinner is over. This especially so if there are more than one or two. It is also likely to lead to better photographs. But if photos are to be taken at the table, ensure the photographer is briefed as to what is required.

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[As an aside from photography, it is wise to consider where award winners are placed on the seating plan, ideally to ensure their walk to the top table is not unduly lengthy.]

Guests' photos

The practice of taking guests' photos before and even during dinner seems on the wane, as does the business of having prints available immediately after the dinner. The result of digital and web based photography.

Photographers

There are a small number of professionals experienced in livery events and halls, who know the protocol. It is their practice to wear dinner jacket when appropriate. If using a photographer unused to City/Livery functions, he may need to be briefed on the preferred dress code.

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Livery Committee

1st April 2015

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