

INFORMATION FOR GUESTS

We will be delighted to welcome you to The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers. The most important principle in all our events is that we show courtesy to fellow guests. We're not here to impose rules but our formal events are something special and quite different from a business lunch or dinner so it's good to know in advance what to expect. People tend to relax if they feel like they fit in. We hope this information will help you to enjoy your time with us and feel that you are among friends.

What should I wear?

All our invitations will show very clearly the dress code for that event. For formal lunches in the City, the dress code is **business dress**. This means suit, shirt and tie and black shoes or a business suit (trousers or skirt and jacket) or dress with wrap or cardigan. Liverymen will wear their Livery badges, on green and yellow ribbons. Court members wear green gowns. Out of courtesy to others, and because looking smart gives us all a boost, jeans, trainers and leisure wear are not acceptable, even if they are "designer label". The photos that appear throughout this website and below are a good guide.



Most dinners will be **Black Tie**. That means classic dinner jacket, white dress shirt and black bow tie and black polished shoes for gentlemen - NO string ties, white tuxedos or coloured velvet jackets. Ladies wear dresses or evening skirts (long or midi length) or smart evening trousers. Jumpsuits are best avoided. Dress "up" rather than down. A jacket, pashmina or scarf is traditional to cover shoulders.



For the Livery Dinner, the dress code moves up to full evening dress. Many gentlemen will wear full "**White Tie**" but Black Tie is fine too. Formal national dress and uniform for those entitled to wear it are positively welcomed and always much appreciated. Ladies will generally go to town with long dresses in a rainbow of colours but there's no need to spend a fortune. White and black-tie outfits can be hired and most dresses will be High Street, obtained online, charity shop finds or vintage, rather than designer label.

If you have any questions at all, either ask your host or feel free to contact the Clerk on +44 (0) 20 7236 2932. There are some great examples in the photos below.



Of course we don't always dress like this! Days out, social events on Zoom and weekends away are casual. We will always tell you what to expect, or you can check with the Clerk if you have any questions.

Arriving

The invitation will give you the full postal address of the venue. It's a privilege to be able to host many of our events in locations which would not generally be open to the public.

Our Court lunches are held at **Apothecaries' Hall, on Black Friars Lane, London EC4V 6EL**. This is a narrow, cobbled lane. It is not completely pedestrianised so please watch out for bikes and motorcycles. We are 3 minutes' walk from Blackfriars station and about 6 minutes' walk from St Paul's tube station. The best place for taxis to stop is Playhouse Yard, just around the corner from the Hall.

Timings

Timings are always shown as "12.30 for 1pm" or "7 for 7.30pm". This allows time for guests to deal with coats, be welcomed and meet friends and colleagues before the formal call into lunch. In practice, you should aim to arrive at, or very soon after the first time shown. For example, if the timing is 12.30 for 1pm and you only arrive at 1pm, everyone will have moved into the Hall already and you may feel rushed and/or embarrassed. Luncheon usually ends around 3pm; a dinner will end no later than 10.30pm.

Guests will be asked to join a receiving line so they can be welcomed personally by the Master and the Wardens, the most senior office holders within the Company. The Beadle, our Toastmaster/Master of Ceremonies, will ask for your name and will announce you. There will be many guests still to arrive behind you so please just say hello and move through to join other guests.

You will be offered sparkling wine or a soft drink. Your host, or one of the Stewards, will ensure that you are looked after during the reception and will introduce you to other Spectacle Makers. When the Beadle announces that the meal is ready, all guests, other than visiting Livery Company Masters and Prime Wardens, will move through into the Hall.

For formal events, there will always be a seating plan. Guests will always be placed next to, or opposite, their host and we hope you will enjoy meeting and talking to the other guests around you.

Please stay standing at your place while the Master, Wardens and official guests process into the Hall. It is the Company's practice to clap along until they reach their places. Once everyone is in place and Grace has been said by the Chaplain, we will sit down and service begins.

Can I choose what I want to eat and drink?

We don't have a menu to choose from, like a restaurant, as there can be as many as 150 guests to serve within a limited time. Most of our events involve formally-served meals of 3 courses with wines or a soft drink. We cannot cater for every individual like or dislike but special dietary requirements are never a problem. The chefs will be happy to provide dishes suitable for you so long as we have advance notice. Please make sure your host knows if there is anything you cannot eat, **particularly if you are allergic to particular ingredients** and ask them to include the details on their booking form. Final instructions will be given to the kitchen a week before the event. On the day, if you have any concerns about the food that has been presented to you, please ask to speak to the Hall Manager.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones should be turned off and put away on entry to the Hall. They must NOT be answered or used to call, text, post updates or take photos during the meal. No-one should take photos of fellow guests without asking their permission. Recording events without the right consents is against the law.

Livery protocols, toasts and speeches

We do ask you NOT to move around the Hall during the meal. This is for practical reasons, to help the service team, as well as showing consideration for your fellow guests. If you have to leave the room, you should wait until after the Loyal Toast before moving and slip quietly back into your place when you return. Unless you are on call, it's polite to your host and to the Company to stay right until the end of the meal. Guests must NOT disrupt the running order of an event, shout out comments or propose toasts.

At dinners, but not at lunches, we may sing a Grace. If so, the words will be printed in your programme.

Towards the end of each meal, The Master will lead the Loyal Toast. After dessert, the Master rises and raises a single toast, to The Queen. Everyone stands and repeats "The Queen". At lunches, the Master will give a speech. It is considered very rude to leave the room during the Master's Speech. At dinners, there will also be a formal welcome to all guests and the Principal Guest will respond. Spectacle Makers pride themselves on keeping to time, so our speeches are never too long.

The formal proceedings always end with the Clerk's Toast, to "The Master, Wardens and Fellowship of Spectacle Makers of London – may they flourish, root and branch, for ever" and a fond farewell.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Our code of conduct is simple. We simply ask that anyone who attends an event shows respect for the Company and for the people they may meet. We expect that no-one will cause offence to anyone else.

What happens if I am caught on transport or ill on the day?

Do let us know please if things change, even on the day of the lunch, so we can adjust plans accordingly. Guests should be aware that their host will have paid for them and will be looking forward to seeing them, so please try to contact them first. They will have our emergency contact numbers.

Don't hesitate to call us in advance if you have any questions and while you are with us, we encourage you to ask any of our members about the Company and what we do. Liverymen come from a wide range of professions within and outside the optical world. We hope you will enjoy some interesting conversations in unique and very special surroundings.

We will look forward to meeting you.