

Master's Consort

Note: for "Master" in these notes, read as appropriate "Prime Warden" or "Upper Bailiff"

There are many opportunities for the Master's Consort to enjoy Livery and City activities. These are opportunities, not requirements, although accompanying the Master at various functions is expected. Previous consorts emphasise how helpful it is to attend as many functions as possible, not only the high profile ones, as each has its own varying and huge rewards.

As your partner progresses through the ranks to become Master, you will naturally get to know your predecessor very well. His/her comments, advice and help on their year, indeed as it progresses and afterwards, is invaluable, their ongoing support is there if required and it is wonderful to be able to talk about events and your personal involvement with "one who has done it". Do not hesitate to talk to previous consorts, they will always provide advice and assistance.

- the form of address used is up to the Master and his consort. If the Consort is female, she may be known as "The Master's Lady" or, sometimes, the "Mistress [Livery Company]". A male consort is likely to be called "The Master's Consort" though a number of male consorts have been very happy to be called "the Mistress" recognising the ancient terminology.
- the Consort will be invited to attend up to a third of the external functions with the Master. Invitations to some functions do not include the Master's Consort but if appropriate the office will enquire if the Master can be accompanied. At every Court meeting a report of all the functions attended by the Master and any accompanying person is presented. This provides a useful planning reference for the incoming Consort.
- invitations will be received for the Consort to attend events, including the Mansion House or other Livery Companies, in aid of charity. It is normal for a charge to be made for the meal, where provided. In the event that you are unable to go, it is at your discretion as to whether you send a donation or not. Masters are generally not included in such invitations.
- the Consort may choose to organise a similar function, but this is by no means an absolute expectation. If the Company does not own a Hall, this can become very expensive and is not really practical it is possible the office staff have not the time to help organise such a function.
- some events may see the need for a few words to be said in public. Speaking literally for no more than two or three minutes is enough. If this seems daunting to you, remember that the whole assembly is with you and wishing you to do well – and they are eager to hear whatever you have to say.
- In some Companies, the Consort traditionally says a few words
 - when receiving and handing over the Consort's jewel before the Installation Lunch/Dinner

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- and possibly at another Company event towards the end of the Master's year
- The names and photos of the consorts of other Livery Masters can be found under each Livery Company at <http://www.liverycompanies.net>. This data base is updated at regular intervals and it is recommended that you download it to your smart phone, if you have one, so that you can use it easily to refresh your memory before going to events. Do make sure that the organisers have yours (and your partner's) photos well in advance of installation.
- Clothing tips for female consorts
 - When the invitation states "White tie, tails" or "Evening Dress" it is customary to wear formal evening dress, which means a full-length dress with elbow-length gloves (though gloves are now less frequently worn), the gloves are removed before starting to eat. It is usual practice for the shoulders to be covered.
 - At "Black tie" dinners, you have a wider scope to wear mid-calf length evening dress or a long skirt/evening trousers and an evening jacket.
 - At the Ironbridge Weekend there are two "Black Tie" dinners, but the Saturday evening is more formal one and most ladies wear a long dress or skirt.
 - HM The Queen's Garden Party is the only occasion during the year when, for ladies, dress code requires that a hat must be worn. Many Consorts do wear hats to the United Guilds' Service at St Paul's but it is not essential.
 - For some years it has been the custom for ladies to wear hats at day functions (usually church services) attended by the Lady Mayoress. The Clerk's Assistant will check with Mansion House if necessary.
 - At the Installation Day church service (if there is one) on the day you become the Master's Consort, you need to decide, in discussion with the incoming Wardens' ladies, whether to wear hats or not. It is your day.
 - If you are invited to lunch or tea in the Mansion House by the Lady Mayoress for one of her informal gatherings of Masters' ladies, you do not need to wear a hat.
 - A Past Master's Lady comments that from experience two or three smart day outfits will see you through the day functions, mix and match is great, a huge amount of these people you will not have met before and each function that you attend will be varied, depending on the Livery Companies' interests.
- Clothing tips for male consorts
 - At white or black tie dinners, it is customary not to wear a coloured cummerbund or coloured waistcoat, and that the tie is white or black

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- as appropriate
- Morning coat for formal occasions is a single breasted black coat with tails, a matching waistcoat and formal striped trousers. These can be hired from many gentlemen's outfitters.

Past Consorts' Year Groups

Each year at Ironbridge, the Masters set up a Past Masters' Year group so that they can continue to keep meeting up from time to time with the friends they have made from other companies during their Masters' respective years. Typical events arranged by a PMYG include annual dinners, lunches, weekends away and City walks.

It is now becoming customary for the Consorts to set up similar groupings so that they too can continue to meet up from time to time.

Past Masters' Consorts' Comments

- It is advisable to keep your diary free of other events during your year as Master's Consort. Not all invitations come in well in advance of the date and it is a pity to miss out on the varied livery events
- Events do slow down over Christmas/New Year and again over the Easter Weekend. August is a good time to take a holiday.
- The Ironbridge Weekend is well worth attending to meet up with other Masters' Consorts.
- On the Sunday morning of the Ironbridge Weekend, the Masters meet to formalise their Past Masters' Association. There is often a similar gathering for the Masters' consorts.
- You might find it helpful to have visiting cards to hand out

Not all Masters take over at the same time of the year. Many change in the Autumn but a large number change in June/July and a few change in January/February/August, etc. You will find that, as a result, there is a constant changeover of Masters' consorts during the year. Keep yourself upto date by downloading the Consorts' photo album issued 2-3 times a year.

Information Sources

The Livery Companies database is held by the Livery Committee
<http://liverydatabase.liverycompanies.info>

Livery Committee courses information may be found at
<http://www.liverycommitteecourses.org>

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City of London Directory & Livery Companies Guide ("The Blue Book") is published annually in January. The Company's Office and the Master will each have a copy.

There is now a useful joint Masters and Consorts picture book where you can see the couple side by side at <http://www.liverycompanies.london>, or you can choose separate Masters and Consorts picture books.