

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?



KICKING UP YOUR EVENTS A NOTCH

HOW TO HOST ROYALTY AT YOUR EVENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INVITING ROYALTY TO YOUR EVENT	1
Example Letter	1
BEFORE THE EVENT	2
Award Recommendations	2
Crash Space	2
Eating Restrictions	2
Feast Tickets.....	3
WHAT THE ROYALS NEED AT THE EVENT	3
Help Unloading.....	3
Royalty Room	3
Sanctum Regnum	4
Calligraphers.....	4
A Court Herald.....	4
Head Table	4
Retinue Table	4
ETIQUETTE	5
How to Address Royalty	5
Bowing to Royalty	5
Sanctum Regnum	5
FEASTS	6
Feast Opening Etiquette.....	6
Presentations.....	6
Served Feasts.....	6
Potluck Feasts.....	7
Entertainment	7
Toast Protocol.....	7
COURTS	8
Set Up	8
Court Etiquette	8
Presentation	8
Announcements	9
When Called Up At Court.....	9
Closing Court	9
Visiting Royalty	9
Baronial Courts	10
AFTER THE EVENT	10
FOR YOUR INFORMATION	10
FROM THE AUTHOR	10

INVITING THE ROYALTY TO YOUR EVENT

The easiest ways to get the Royalty to your event is to WRITE EARLY and invite them. There are so many events in the Kingdom that Their Majesties want to attend, but they can in reality only attend some of them. If your branch would like them to visit, write to them several months in advance. If at all possible, write that letter as soon as you know who the winner is of the Crown Tourney. It is all right to give them an invitation at a court, but do follow up with another invitation after the event. It is easy to misplace items at an event, even for the royalty. Include in the invitation the date and location of the event (both SCA and modern), with good directions, and the name and number of the contact person. Also include information on any special arrangements you have made for the royals comfort (see example letter). They will write back to you as soon as they have reached a decision. They, or one of their retinue, should try to call you closer to the event to check on any last minute details.

EXAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

Unto: Their Majesties Rex and Regina, King and Queen of An Tir.

From: Lady Jane of Doe, representing the Shire of No Name.

Respectful Greetings, Your Majesties.

Our Shire is hosting a gathering of your subjects in the 2nd of May A.S. XXXVIII. We would be most honored by your presence at this event.

For this event we have arranged to use the Unity Church in Green Valley. The site is just outside of Major City, WA. Beautiful trees surround the site. We will have use of the hall for the day and the feast at night. The tournament can be held in a center courtyard. We have reserved a separate Royalty room for your use; it is large enough to hold any retinue you may be bringing if you desire. This is a wet site. A map to the site is enclosed.

For your comfort, we offer you either crash space at my home, which is two blocks from the site; we have plenty of room to house retinue as well. If you prefer a room at a local motel the shire will be happy to pick up the tab. The motel is about five miles from the site.

If any special arrangements need be made, or you have any specific dietary requests, please let us know. We would be privileged to serve you lunch during the day. It will be a great honor to have you at our event. We do hope that you will join us.

Written this 30th day of January, A.S. XXXVIII

In service to Shire and Kingdom,

Lady Jane of the Doe

(mka) Jane Doe, 123 Any Street, Major City WA. 99999 (123) 555-4567
or e-mail Jane_Doe@anywhere.com

BEFORE THE EVENT

AWARD RECOMMENDATION

When you invite Their Majesties to your event, it is also a good time to make award recommendations for your area. Make recommendations well in advance of your event. This gives Their Majesties plenty of time to get scrolls done in time for your event. Remember that anyone can recommend anyone for an award. Be sure to include the full SCA and modern name of the person you are recommending, where they are from both in the modern world and their SCA branch, specific services they have done, amount of time they have been in the SCA, and last but not least the award you are recommending them for. If you know dates use them. If you're unsure of any of the above information ask the other members of your branch for help. The more detailed the letter, the more persuasive it will be. Make sure to mention if they will be attending your event. If not, indicate other events that they will be at in the near future. When a group of people want to recommend a person it is better to do so individually, as opposed to a single petition. If writing a recommendation for your lord/lady you should indicate your relationship, and keep it as factual as possible, try not to get too mushy. Make sure to always include your own name both SCA & modern, your branch, and make sure to date your letter.

Beware of exaggerating what someone has done; remember that your credibility is on the line. Copies should be sent to the Prince/Princess when there is one. Copies should be sent to the secretaries of the order if recommending for peerage, which you can do. Enclosing a photograph may help, if you have one. Make sure to mail your letter ASAP.

CRASH SPACE

It is very expensive for the Royalty to travel to events every weekend, even with the royal travel fund to help. One way local branches can help reduce these expenses is to offer the King and Queen crash space or a pre-paid motel room. If you're intending to do this mention it in your initial letter. Remember to inquire as to any allergies such as smoke, pets, or children. Your branch should not expect to pay for a motel room for retinue or others who travel with the Royals, with the exception of the Royals own children. Crash space for the retinue should be arranged ahead of time also. Many retinue members are traveling on limited budgets and are considered as Their Royal Majesties right arms.

Crash space or motel rooms should be as near the event as possible. If Their Majesties leave the event site (for example, to change clothes at the crash space), a communication link should be in place so people at the site will know the time of Their Majesties expected return.

EATING RESTRICTIONS

Many people have food or drink allergies or other restrictions on what they can eat or drink. It is a nice gesture to inquire into the royal food preferences so that adjustments can be made to the food that is being served to the high table.

FEAST TICKETS

Feast tickets are a traditional courtesy; the Royalty does not pay for their feast tickets. This should include Their Royal Highnesses. They shouldn't have to pay to attend an event held in their own lands. These are considered paid by the local branch. The Royalty tends to spend a lot of money traveling so we do try to save them as much money as possible. This will make it a bit easier for the Royals to travel more. Having Royalty at your event will increase the amount of people attending your event be ready. You can expect that the retinue will buy their own feast tickets.

WHAT ROYALS NEED AT THE EVENT

HELP UNLOADING

Royalty travel with much regalia to enhance the atmosphere. A reserved parking space near the door makes the loading and unloading so much easier. Their Majesties retinue will help and supervise. It is a great aid if the local branch members with muscles can help with the actual moving of these items. Help with set up is also appreciated but the retinue will usually handle this.

Having someone near the door to hold it open and direct the retinue and Royals to the "Royalty Room" is a nice touch. It also helps to clearly mark the Royals parking space. A reserved parking space for Their Royal Highnesses, already marked, is in order if they will be attending as well. Remember that Their Royal Highnesses may need help with unloading.

ROYALTY ROOM

Royalty need space for all their regalia when not in use, room to change, space to meet with people privately, and a room for retinue and calligraphers to work. The Royalty room should be big enough, if at all possible, to hold several people and include a coat rack, a large table (or two), several chairs, and still have room for boxes on the floor. If a room this large is not available give them what room you can. You may have to consider blocking off a corner of the site. Please post a sign on the door marked "Royalty Room...Admission by Royal Invitation Only—Please Knock".

Check with Their Majesties if they have their guard or if locals will need to be posted at the door with spear or halberd. This adds to the atmosphere and provides security for the royal regalia. Security can be very important, but leave this to Their Majesties if they wish such service. Also don't expect one person to stand there all day, arrange for shifts to be manned.

If the Crown Prince & Princess are also at your event consider having a second Royalty room. Another room is also welcome if there is Royalty visiting from another Kingdom.

A room and child-minding services, for both the day and evening portions of the event, are very welcome if any of the Royalty or retinue have children with them.

SANCTUM REGNUM

This is the area set aside for the thrones. It should be near the main activity for the day, yet outside any through walkways. The retinue should set up this area, if possible. Keep in mind that not all retinue will be at every event the Their Majesties will be at. Locals may be called upon to do some of the setting up. Please let them know if there are any restrictions such as hanging banners, etc. (E.g., if only masking tape is allowed, be sure to have some at the site for them to use). This area is a semi-private space in which Their Majesties can meet with those having business with the Crown. ONLY persons who have been invited should enter this area.

CALLIGRAPHERS

Please let Their Majesties know the names of local calligraphers available to do any last minute work on scrolls, if needed. Inform these people so they will be prepared with their own pens and ink. If this service is needed please caution the locals that the scrolls are very secret and not to be mentioned to anyone. This can take the fun out of it for anyone who may be receiving an award.

COURT HERALD

Early in the day, the local herald should approach Their Majesties to find out their needs concerning presentations during feasts and court. The choice of which among the heralds present will herald the court is up to Their Majesties. Sometimes the royal herald will be with Their Majesties and will be handling the court.

During the day the herald should announce whom the populace should contact concerning presentations and other court business. The herald will meet with their Majesties to decide on the order of business at court. After court has been organized the herald should notify people making presentation when they will be called forth. Usually personal gifts to Their Majesties can either be done in private or at court; this is up to Their Majesties.

HEAD TABLE

In the afternoon the Queen will need to know how many spaces are available at the head table for the feast. The Queen will determine whom to invite and will direct someone to deliver the invitations. Her Majesty usually will consult whom to set at the table with advice from the autocrat or seneschal, or Royal Patrons or Baron/Baroness when this applies. Seats for six to ten people at high table, rather than the usual eight, lets couples be seated together and still maintain an even number of guests on either side of the King & Queen. Leave this to Her Majesty to determine. Set the tablecloth on the high table so it hangs to the floor on the front side, but hangs only a few inches on the side where the Royalty is seated. This keeps feet and legs "private" while allowing people to stand up without fear of pulling off the cloth accidentally.

Their Majesties retinue will set out their feast gear, or you will be asked to assist with this. Retinue will also clear and clean the feast gear, you may appoint someone to offer to take care of this task for them. Try to have a space or help them if the space is tight.

RETINVE TABLE

Some Royalty prefers their retinue to have their own table – near or behind them (space permitting) works best. This way they are able to assist the Royalty as needed. Ask Their Majesties what they wish before setting things up.

ETIQUETTE

Having Royalty at your event adds to the medieval atmosphere. It also draws many more people to your event as mentioned before. How people behave toward the Royalty can greatly influence that atmosphere. Here are some very basic rules of etiquette. Please share this information with those in your branch who may not be familiar with Royalty. Please remember that the Royalty will work with the autocrat and any locals willing to help, most importantly try to remember that they are humans too. They also are trying to provide you with a good SCA experience.

HOW TO ADDRESS ROYALTY

If you need to speak with Their Majesties, approach to within five to eight feet and wait to be recognized. You may approach a member of the retinue who will announce you to Their Majesties. It enhances the medieval atmosphere if you can state your requests using such phrases as "With you Majesty's permission".

The King and Queen are addressed as "Your Majesties" or "Your Royal Majesties". The heirs to the throne, Crown Prince & Princess, are "Your Royal Highness" or "Your Highness". A Prince and Princess of a Principality are addressed as "Your Highness". A Tanist and Tanista, who are heirs to Principality thrones, are addressed as "Your Excellency".

BOWING TO ROYALTY

All persons of whatever rank should bow to the Royalty as they pass, at any time during an event. This need not be deep or of long duration if both parties are just passing. Bow also when beginning to speak to or when leaving the presence of Royalty. This can be a hard concept for newcomers, as in the modern world we do not bow. Please remember that we are recreating the Middle Ages and in period they would have bowed or faced the consequences.

We also bow to any of rank, or title. This shows respect. It also makes everyone feel good and adds to the medieval feel. When in doubt bow, even to those of no rank, it feels good and puts you in the mood. It teaches others to bow, making all feel more in period.

SANCTUM REGNUM

Treat the area around the thrones with the respect due the Crown. This holds true during the events of the day as well as during feasts and courts. A short bow should be given when passing in front of this area WHETHER OR NOT THEIR MAJESTIES ARE SEATED ON THE THRONES. This is an indication of respect for your Kingdom. Avoid walking in the "invisible circle" of approximately ten feet that surrounds the thrones. Do not take a short cut between the thrones. If at all possible, leave enough space when setting up to leave adequate passage for people to pass the thrones without intruding on Their Majesties space.

FEASTS

FEAST OPENING ETIQUETTE

Let the Crown know when the feast is scheduled to start. If they know that they are going to be delayed, Their Majesties may give you permission to start the feast without them. Otherwise, delay serving until the Royalty is seated. It is bad form to start without the Crown there, to say the least. If the Royalty wishes to make an entrance you should expect the herald to be ready. When they are ready to enter, the feast herald should call "All rise for Their Royal Majesties, Rex and Regina, King and Queen of An Tir". Everyone rises and remains standing until the King and Queen are seated. They will indicate that the populace may be seated. As always, the populace should bow as the Royalty passes their tables on the way to the head table.

Occasionally the guests being seated at the head table will process in with the Royalty. If so, they will follow Their Majesties and the herald should announce them also. The guests should wait until Their Majesties are seated before seating themselves. The Crown may also choose to have guests already at the head table before they enter. They would then rise when the herald announces, "all rise". Make sure to ask the Queen her preferences when determining the head table arrangements earlier in the day. Whenever you cross in front of Their Majesties bow. This includes at the feast when moving around to visit with friends or while entertaining. There is usually no special ceremony for the Royalty leaving the feast.

PRESENTATIONS

The herald should locate those persons making presentations during the feast (if this is the Crowns' wish) so that he/she is aware of where the presenters are sitting. The herald should give them some warning of when their presentation is scheduled so they may gather their gifts and be ready to come quickly before Their Majesties when called. Remind them to leave behind any weapons they may be carrying. Only those with permission may bear arms in the presence of Royalty.

When called forth by the herald, they should approach the head table, bow, and make their presentation. If they wish the populace to hear their presentation, remind them to speak loudly and slowly. Remind them to wait for Their Majesties response before bowing and withdrawing. The herald will announce the gift to the populace. Even when the presenters speak loudly they are not always audible to the populace.

Anyone making a presentation should include a 3x5 card with their SCA name and branch, modern name, address and description of the gift. Royalty receive many gifts and this aids them in acknowledging you.

SERVED FEASTS

There are many ways to serve the head table. Elegant service is one of the major factors in reproducing a convincingly period feast. All foods are served to the head table first, starting with Their Majesties, before being served to the populace. Head table servers should bow to Their Majesties, asking for assent to serve, and explain what the food is that is being served. The servers should be knowledgeable about the ingredients in case the guests have any food allergies. The servers then present the dish to each person at the head table in order, according to his rank, then to the general populace. The populace should have their own servers.

Two to three servers are recommended for the head table. One for the Royalty, the others proceeds down each side of the table from the middle. Its nice (food allowing) to offer each course twice, making sure that all have had enough. A herald announcing each remove is an extra that sets a medieval atmosphere. Try to keep the meal flowing.

POTLUCK FEASTS

Potlucks are the most common way the Society gathers to dine. An Tir uses the potluck feast frequently. The term potluck is a feast catered by the participants. Each should bring a dish of their own making that will feed ten or more.

The most common way a potluck will be served is by the food being placed on long tables, buffet style, with the populace filing past, helping themselves. If this is the style you choose, the head table always serves themselves first. Asking Their Royal Majesties to assign the order of the populace tables is a nice touch, getting you off the hook. Letting one to two tables go at a time keeps everything quiet and orderly.

ENTERTAINMENT

Background music, either live or provided by a "bard in a box" (portable stereo), is not only acceptable but very period, as long as it won't obscure conversation. Entertainment at a feast can make it more enjoyable, but chose your entertainment carefully. Bartolomes of Granvilee lists twelve things necessary for a successful feast. Two such listings are agreeable company and pleasant music. Most people are content to just talk to friends during a feast. Pick strolling minstrels or jugglers who can wander and entertain the populace without everyone having to stop talking. If the entertainer needs the attention of everyone, make the act loud enough for everyone to hear. Short segments are nice; it is better to leave them wanting more, then to bore everyone. Also keep the tone light and uplifting.

Sometimes it is best to have entertainment between the feast and court when the lights are on and people can give more attention. Although this can be enjoyable for both the populace and the entertainers it all is up to the approval of the Royalty, and only if time permits. The easiest way to kill the mood is to present something invisible or inaudible. Skits or bits of plays can be ineffective, they are almost sure to be lost in background chatter. Some short period playlets can be good, if easy to see, hear and understand. Including the populace in some way keeps their attention.

TOASTING PROTOCOL

It is customary in An Tir for the person of highest rank, or senior noble, at the feast deliver the first toast (sometimes they need to be gently and quietly reminded). They also arrange who else will toast next. The first toast is always the to King and Queen (even when they are not present at the feast). Next is to Their Royal Highnesses, when this applies (if present or not). Next we toast to our Kingdom, An Tir. Following Their Majesties lead, other toasts may be made to the autocrat, feastocrat, servers, tourney winner, lists, and so on. Do not put off toasting for too long, as an over-enthusiastic "toaster" may spontaneously offer a toast, which, while not disastrous, may be embarrassing. It is wise to inform your branch of the toasting protocol before hand.

The toaster should stand and get the attention of everyone. Asking everyone to fill their glass for a toast works well. Make the toasts brief and end with the name of the person being toasted. For example, "I ask you to join me in toasting Their Majesties, Rex & Regina, King & Queen of An Tir". Then everyone will lift their goblets and repeat, "To Rex & Regina" and take a sip. The next toaster will take their turn and so on.

COURTS

SET UP

Court may be held at any time during the event, before the tourney (opening courts are common), after the feast, or late in the event. Consult with Their Majesties both before the event and during the day to set the estimated starting time.

In addition to Their Majesties and a herald, several people are needed to hold court. Check with Their Majesties as to the extent of retinue they have with them. Locals may be called on to assist by holding scrolls, serving drink, taking notes, and keeping track of gifts and awards given. Guards may also be needed. Their Majesties may ask for suggestions of locals who can fill these roles.

It helps everyone to see better if the thrones can be raised even a foot above the floor. With the Royals' permission the thrones should be set front and center. Leave enough room behind the thrones for the retinue and heralds.

COURT ETIQUETTE

Court may NOT start without Their Majesties. Sometimes it takes longer than planned to finish scrolls and organize the presentations. You may consider having some entertainment for the populace between the feast and court. The Royalty will let you know when they will be ready, all you have to do is ask. Explain you are able to provide the entertainment to fill the time if they wish. They may be very happy to hear this.

When the Royalty are ready, the herald should take their place (or enter before Their Majesties). The herald will announce for everyone to rise for "Their Majesties, Rex & Regina, King & Queen of An Tir". Everyone should rise and bow deeply as the Royals pass. Guards may proceed the Royals and take their assigned places in front of the thrones. The populace remain standing until they are given permission for the populace to be seated.

PRESENTATIONS

If you are going to make a presentation, try to seat yourself close to the aisle. Have your gift with you and rehearse your speech, if making one. When called you must remove all your weapons. Removing weapons while approaching the Royalty may be theatrical it also takes up valuable time. You may want to skip wearing weapons to court all together, when at court you are under the King's peace. Walk to within ten feet of the thrones and bow. Then approach to within three feet and bow a second time. In front of the thrones you will find pillows, kneel on the pillows. Speak clearly, slowly, and loudly. Wait for Their Majesties' responses before rising. At times the herald will announce what you have said or at least tell what your gift was. They do this for those too far away to hear or see. The herald will sometimes repeat what Their Majesties have said to you. When you rise bow, back up three

feet and bow again, and be careful of stairs if there are any. If you are wearing a gown with a long train, or a long tunic, be careful not to step on your garb. Turn back and walk back to your chair. Some Royalty will prefer ALL gifts to be presented during the feast since court may be long enough without adding the presentation of gifts to the agenda. You must always check in with the herald first before trying to make a presentation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you have announcements, let the herald know when they ask for court business. This includes autocrat announcements and “crass commercial” announcements as well. Remove all weapons and approach as suggested above. Ask the Crowns’ permission to speak to the populace. Rise and step to the side before making your announcement. This will help the populace hear. Do not turn your back on Their Majesties as they wish to hear also (it’s also rude). When finished, turn and thank Their Majesties for allowing you time in THEIR court. Remove yourself as suggested above.

WHEN YOU ARE CALLED UP AT COURT

DON’T PANIC! Their Majesties will not throw you into the dungeons. You are probably being thanked for doing something of service for your branch or Kingdom. So smile and approach the thrones. Stop at ten feet, bow and remove all weapons you may be wearing. Advance to within three feet of the thrones and bow again, move to the pillows and kneel. Kneel nobly with your head held high and your back straight. Try not to kneel on your long skirt, train, or long tunic as this makes rising almost impossible and can make for an embarrassing situation. Listen attentively. Wait for the Royalty to finish their remarks before rising to withdraw.

Please keep in mind that if you have a physical restriction that makes it hard or painful for you to kneel let Their Majesties know. They will understand and they will allow you to remain standing. Once you stand, back up three steps (be careful if there are stairs). Bow, turn and go back to your seat. Collect your weapons on the way. Relax and enjoy the congratulation of your friends.

CLOSING COURT

When court is finished, the herald will ask if there is any other business for the court. Their Majesties will sometimes address the populace at this time. If there is no further business the herald will announce “There being no further business, this court is now ended, all rise for Their Most Royal Majesties”. The Royalty may process out followed by their retinue. Everyone should bow as the Royalty passes.

The retinue will begin packing up the regalia and taking down the thrones; they will also pack the gifts. If locals have been helping they should remain and help pack up. Their Majesties will let them know when they are released from service.

VISITING ROYALTY

The retinue will make sure that the thrones will be set up where Their Majesties wish them placed as well as seating for any visiting Royalty who wish to be present at court. Remind your branch that they should bow to visiting Royalty as they do our own. When you see a hat that you don’t recognize, bow just in case. Making visitors feel welcome will spread the good name of An Tir far and wide.

BARONIAL COURTS

These are held during the Royal court. The Baron & Baroness will ask formally for permission to hold a Baronial court. They should have their own herald and should be seated off to one side of Their Majesties. Their Majesties should always have the center position at court. If the Baron & Baroness wish to hold a court they should make those arrangements either prior to the event or earlier in the day. This general rule holds true if you have a Royal Patron as well.

AFTER THE EVENT

Everyone is tired at the end of an event. This is especially true for the Royalty and their retinue. It is a great help to have local people to assist the retinue in re-loading the car with regalia and Their Majesties personal belongings. There may be a special way to load everything into the cars. Let the person in charge of loading handle this and try to assist without getting into the way. Some Royals are packed to the gills and need to be very precise when re-loading.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Remember, although human, that Their Majesties are "Royal" and deserving of Royal treatment. They are also willing to work with your branch in making your event a success for all. Do not be shy about discussing any possible problems with them, such as site time limitations, feast hall space, and so on. Do try to keep their wishes in mind at all times, and do what you can to make their stay as pleasant as possible. This is your branch's time to shine, so enjoy it. All that is left to do is smile, accept their thank-you's for your hospitality, and wave good-bye!

FROM THE AUTHOR

This booklet describes what to do when Royalty visits your branch perhaps for the first time. This booklet was written by Her Excellency Mistress Olivia Visconti for distribution within the Kingdom of An Tir.

This is not an official publication of the SCA nor does it delineate SCA policy. Neither is it an official publication of the Kingdom of An Tir.

I would like to thank Viscountess Catheryn Stewert Morgan, who gave me the courage and support to tackle this project long ago in the beginning. Duchess Gabriell MacBain, who allowed me the honor of serving on her retinue as her Head Lady-in-waiting. Where I learned most of the ideas in this handbook first hand.

In Cheerful Service I remain,

Mistress Olivia Visconti
Baroness Wealdsmere, Founding
Baroness of An Tir