

# High End Events

Some thoughts at the request of Their Excellencies

*This article was written in response to a request from our Baron and Baroness for suggestions towards creating “high end” events of the type that we are known for stewarding. Consequently the primary purpose of this document is to highlight the many and varied areas that we know require consideration in the lead up to bidding for an event, and the many avenues of work and coordination that are necessary to run a successful event.*

*We also chose to cover some areas that are nothing more than common sense because, as our Baron is fond of saying, “common sense is not”. Our belief was (and still is) that it is better to state the obvious than make a flawed assumption.*

*As a result of all that, the following article is more of a concept document than an instruction manual. As always, you are welcome to contact us if you wish to discuss anything further.*

Some thoughts from Isabel Maria and Christian  
regarding the 2007 Midwinter Coronation  
as requested by Their Excellencies

These preliminary thoughts and suggestions are a combination of the information we have provided to other Stewards and Ladies in Waiting of Royal Events, along with some considerations specific to Coronation and your chosen venues

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## Our suggested Time Table of Events:

- Friday:** Revel with A&S display & performances  
**Saturday:** Stepping down, Feast, Coronation, Ball (as planned)  
**Sunday:** Peerage Meetings, Queen's Champion, Post Revel

This format is based on experience. It has proved, in our opinion, to be the most successful overall timetable in 'high end' Royal Events. Reasonings are explained throughout this document.

By using this format you get:

An icebreaker event that also provides an opportunity for the event stewards to enjoy an event without doing anything. It also doubles as the perfect opportunity to display the wide variety of talents within your Barony, which needs to be done before the business, not afterward a whole day of impressive formality and ceremonial display associated with Coronation of your King and Queen a day of the business of the Kingdom that brings together Peers, and fighters, that finishes with a casual, unwinding post revel

## GENERAL ISSUES:

### Theme

A unifying theme is absolutely essential in this kind of event.

It needs to be carried through every part of the event in order to add continuity between all the disparate locations and mini-events involved. But such a theme should not be obvious and dominating, rather it should pervade the event at a subconscious level, adding texture and depth and uniting it into a whole

Such a theme doesn't need to be related to a particular culture or time period. It could be a simple one, such as colour. "**Red and Gold**" or "**Red, Gold and Blue**" would be striking, easy to achieve themes. With the former, anything made for this event could be used in the barony in the future.

Alternately, the theme could be symbolic (**“towers”** or **“stars”** or **“roses”** etc). For example, a theme including roses could be used in many ways. Past Queens form the Ladies of the Rose. Roses are a period flower and rose is a period scent, decoration and flavour. Where flowers are presented or displayed, use roses. Where incense is used to scent an entrance way, use rose. Where food is served, flavour some with rose. Where water is needed for hand-washing, scent it with rose. Where soap is required, choose rose, etc. While any period edible flower could be used, roses have special meaning, especially at Coronation.

Can we suggest, for various reasons laid out in this, that the theme goes **“red and gold, towers and roses”**.

The other thing an event needs beside an overall concept that ties it together, is attention to detail. But like the theme, this attention and the detail must be invisible. People shouldn't see 100 little details; they should see a medieval coronation.

The millions of layers and textures underlying that coronation should not be obvious without serious scrutiny. The key is to focus on the overall effect and feel for guests and make sure everything contributes to that. A 100 details competing for attention is chaos. Go to a really good restaurant for an example of what we mean (e.g. Rotherams).

## Timing

Timing is critical, especially when there is so much changing of sites.

- Overestimate the length of time required for each part of the event.
- Overestimate the length of time require for travel.
- Build in “invisible time”
- Allocate time for those who need it
- Allow time fillers for those who don't

(Invisible time is slack built into the schedule which allows you to move things forward and backward without anyone knowing and without inconveniencing anyone.)

Ensure that this is shopping time during the events scheduled in the Arts Centre during the day. People will take the time, scheduled or not.

## **Maitre d' / Host(ess)**

Each venue needs to have a Maitre d' or host. Their job is to greet guests and make them comfortable. They should also direct people to where they can get changed, and advise them where to store their stuff, when things are due to start, any off limit areas etc.

It couldn't hurt if this person is the same person for the whole event. It would help, but that might not be possible. They should be the epitome of grace, be friendly and welcoming and never ruffled.

It also makes them the go-to person who can deal with any wee issues that may arise, while the steward deals with supervising the event and liaising with TRMs court, and the Maitre d' themselves.

This person is not the steward or the day steward. They are the game face standing in for the B&B as host. The steward is there to take care of the mundane stuff. This person should be visible, the steward invisible. They are also not the check in.

## **Maps / Directions**

Have maps not only *to* sites, but also *of* sites

Have maps of the buildings on each site, and also of rooms within the buildings. Clearly mark the function of each room so that people have an idea what is there before they arrive. Especially as far as WCs, changing rooms, and gear storage is concerned.

Ensure that:

- street addresses are noted
- building/room names or plaques are noted
- the map is accurate
- distances are noted
- driving and walking times are noted
- local parking and parking costs should also be given

## Venues

Should have been checked out by now to see what they are like at this time of year.

If not, they need to be visited in good weather and bad weather and at appropriate times of the day within the next couple of weeks so that site peculiarities can be taken into consideration.

Also, sketch and measure the rooms and tourney grounds in detail. Note what can be moved, what needs to be covered, how big the space is and main routes through venues / rooms etc.

Also make note of where cleaning stuff is, toilet paper supplies, power sockets, light switches (including which switch turns on which light), dimmers, heaters, fans curtains, window openers, door locks, security features, phones, sound systems etc, anything that might be necessary on the day. Keep this in a folder that goes to the day steward (who should know this and have walked through the site and poked into its intimate places well before the event).

Other things you should notice here are potholes or water collection points, dodgy floorboards, or other things that may be an issue. Make notes and ask the owners to fix any such issues now. Do a similar check a few weeks out from the event.

A nice touch that has been used successfully in previous events is creating nice medievalised signs (e.g. printed on paper and laminated) that clearly identify rooms.

### **Gate / Check-In:**

- The check in table needs to be at the venue entrance, and easily visible
- It should be situated so that it is not blocking egress
- It must be situated under cover
- There needs to be two people on the table during the busy periods
- Otherwise, the table needs to be manned at all times for late check-ins

If people are not able to enter the venue directly, there should be a room or area (under cover and away from the check in) for people to hang out or get themselves organised. Otherwise, you end up with an over-crowded check-in and frayed tempers before the event begins.

## **Security:**

This is critical during the day, and especially in the Arts Centre. There will be lots of curious public wanting to know what is going on, and wanting to see the Great Hall.

Whoever is acting as security must:

- be very polite
- spend the day preventing people from entering the hall.
- be good at explaining the SCA
- be prepared to give out SCA pamphlets

## **Photographer / Videographer**

Ensure the officer P/Vgraper has a good spot for taking pictures/video of both the ceremonies and also people getting awards. In this situation, both the angle of the photographer and background of the photo are very important. This needs to be thought about thoroughly beforehand. Tweak your layout to suit this consideration.

Portrait opportunities are great – but they really need to be out of the way of the event proper so the mundanity doesn't intrude on the period environment.

## **Storage**

Where are people going to place their baskets and cloaks? Set aside a room for such items at each venue, if at all possible. If not, encourage people to store their stuff in the same area of the room.

Having all the walls and space around tables crammed with baskets and mundanity can really ruin the feel of the event. Not to mention creating a significant safety hazard.

## **Royal Ready Rooms**

These are vital.

At each venue, a room must be set aside for the Crown. If at all possible, a room should also be set aside for the Heirs.

These rooms need to be stocked with care packages and various comfort items. Refer the Coronation Courts section and appendices for further details.

## **Ladies in Waiting:**

The Ladies in Waiting (LIW) need to realize that while this position is an honour, it is primarily a job. It is not about them. Their job is to carry out TRMs requests, to make court etc happen smoothly and to make TRMs look good. They also represent TRMs so must be courteous and graceful at all times.

Ensure that:

- they know what they are letting themselves in for
- at least one has some experience in the role
- they are competent
- they are level headed with an eye for fixing things
- they know Her Majesty cannot be left alone at any time
- they understand when to back off out of hearing range

Please refer to the appendices for further details.

## **Guards**

The Guards need to realize that while this position is an honour, it is primarily a job. It is not about them. Their job is to carry out TRMs requests and to make TRMs look good. They also represent TRMs so must be courteous and chivalric at all times.

Ensure that:

- they know what they are letting themselves in for
- at least one has some experience in the role
- they are competent
- they are level headed
- they know that Her Majesty cannot be left alone at any time and that this sometimes means standing outside doors. (The guards may also need to make allowances for the event steward from time to time.)
- They know when to back off out of hearing range

## **Manners**

Curtseying, bowing, standing, doffing ones hat and taking ones leave are all things which our barony (among many) has let slip. In no other Kingdom would it be acceptable for Lords to remain seated when the Queen entered the arena (as has happened at other Lochac events). It is time for our Barony to lead the way in bringing back these basic elements of chivalry and courtesy.

People may need a refresher course in how to curtsey, bow, doff hats, kiss hands and generally act in the manner expected of the gentry and nobility. And keep in mind, there are multiple techniques for each act. Local “practices” prior to the event can be useful not just for fighting and dancing, but for explaining courts and the Coronation business, and also for refreshing people on how to act and how they can add to the event personally.

## **Other Considerations & Nice Touches:**

Flowers and rose soap in the ladies bathrooms during the event. (While not possible in public access toilets, it is a lovely touch.)

## THE WALK

Ensure there are options for those wearing long court gowns or trains. This might be parking or a pick up set down area, and/or changing rooms available at both venues.

Be aware, that if there is a skerric of mud about, more people will drive between sites.

### **Dirt & Dampness**

Consider the likely hood of wet hems and dirty or wet feet after the walking. Have plenty of mats for wiping feet at both the feast and the court/ball afterwards. (These should be proper door mats, not rugs.)

(As a side note: check with the CCC regarding when and where the major re-modelling of the botanic gardens is due to start. It wouldn't do for Courtiers to be dodging piles of dirt or pools of muddy water.)

# FEASTING

## Hall Decorations:

The most critical factor in the success of an event like this is the periodness of the venue.

Due to the nature of the venue chosen, this is probably the single biggest issue facing you as you strive to create a 'high end' event. Simply hanging "medievaloid" stuff around does not make a feast hall. You need to seriously consider ways to create a medieval hall, not just look at ways to hide the worst elements of a mundane hall

Consider using a silk tent liner or some sort of treatment for a ceiling in the feast hall. This will cut out the modern roof, and eliminate mundane electric lighting.

### Kingdom Banners

These must be displayed prominently behind or above the thrones. Around the thrones, the focus should be on the Crown alone. This is all about the Crown, after all.

### Baronial Banners

Smaller SG banners to the sides of the throne area would be acceptable, but leave big ones for the end of the hall for the Crown to stare at.

### Banners of the populace

These should also be displayed around the room on the sides, roof and back of the hall. This will be one of the few opportunities for the populace to use their good indoor gonfalons for heraldic display in such a wonderfully period manner. It also adds to the ceremony of the event.

If you are concerned about lack of numbers, the populace could be harnessed now to get some made. Additionally, you can alternate or intersperse the personal heraldry with SG banners or badges.

Things to avoid at all costs:

- Non-heraldic banners e.g. commercial enterprises such as the Mangy Mongol
- using serving tabards as wall heraldry
- duct tape and hairy string to hang them
- unbalanced / mismatched display

### Specialty Decorations

Specialty decorations such as a period style known world map have their place, but they should not be used at the expense of period, personal heraldic display.

Also these maps need to be good quality maps. Not “fake maps”, “cartoonesque” creations or similar chicanery. If they are going to fit with the heraldic display and opulence of a quality feast hall they need to be well done, otherwise they will look like sheets being used to hide something. And, as we all know, hiding something poorly just draws attention to it.

Tapestries (well done fakes) or similar period wall hangings are great, but again, need to be high quality. If not, it is better to do without.

The key to hanging decorations is symmetry and organisation. Make sure that similar types and sizes of banners or hangings balance each other, that hangings are put in specific areas and not just randomly distributed about the hall. For example, along the walls could be 3 or 4 standard candelabra on each side. Between each is a tapestry or personal banner or matching SG banners. Smaller banners or similar (e.g. SCA group arms as they had at Cluain) could be hung in rows from or along the roof (think St George’s chapel at Windsor Castle).

## High Table:

### A Canopy

Suspending one over the Royals adds so much that it should be considered essential. Please note that the mechanics of these are very complex, and a half-hearted attempt should be discouraged (not to mention being unsafe).

## **Hangings**

These should be in the kingdom colours and situated behind the whole High Table (incl. Thrones) in order to create a frame for the Crown.

As discussed above the **Kingdom Arms** should be displayed here abouts too.

Kingdom colours (or event theme colours) are always in vogue, but one should be careful to avoid multiple colours and busy designs. The plan is to draw attention to TRMs, not lose them amongst the frou frou.

## **Coloured Table Cloth**

The Crown's section of the table also needs to be emphasized.

A coloured (brocade) table cloth, probably with additional decoration (opulent trim or fringe at the hem, smaller Kingdom arms depicted to show on the front of the table) should be used directly in front of the canopy/hangings. It should not extend much past the Crown.

Consider Church decorations and period depictions of High Tables for inspiration.

## **Elaborate Salt cellar**

Such a valuable piece should be displayed prominently

It should not be too hard to get someone (e.g. Vitale) to make an elaborate brass tower into which a salt cellar fits. It could have a nice banner flying from it (someone could embroider a standard for the tower).

## **Standard candelabra**

(i.e. black, metal and 5' high) work very well with High Table, and around the thrones.

Speak to the populace about creating them. Tycho, Vitale and Sigurd could knock them up in no time. (Tycho and Vitale have experience in the activity.) There is just no substitute for real ones. And the cost in terms of materials and labour won't be that different, but it will pay off a thousand fold (and could be borne by individuals who buy these and loan them for the event).

At a minimum, the candelabra should be used to frame the Crown. Four candelabra would be ideal – two on either side of the canopy behind high table / throne area. This should be considered for Court too.

If there is sufficient time, money and motivation, as well as sufficient space around the hall, additional candelabra could be placed at intervals down each side of the hall. 3 or 4 on either side would be plenty.

Do not place candelabra or high candles between TRMs and the populace as it masks them from their people. Arrange for low pillar or votive candles to light their food.

If there is to be a Court or Royal announcement during the feast, there needs to be additional light organised to the sides of the throne area to ensure there is adequate light for the herald.

### **Seating**

Avoid seating people on the ends of high table, or (more importantly) with their backs to the populace.

## **Tables of the General Populace**

**Doubling up tables** is a great concept

### **Table Cloths**

- Cover tables with sheets,
- then table cloths
- and then table runners

### **Candle holders**

It would be nice to have enough Baronial candle holders that people didn't have to BYO. It also means your feast steward can control the lighting / flame situation better and have the hall entirely candle lit on entry.

We would strongly suggest purchasing the (almost) flat black candle holders such as those the Warehouse sells for about \$2 each. They fit multiple sizes of pillar (even votive) candles, can't fall over and don't intrude.

There should be several of these per table to ensure sufficient light to eat by.

***Avoid paper rondels*** – they are tacky.

Wax is really only a problem when deliberately melted into the tablecloth and paper rondels won't fix that problem. In fact, they will give us curly-edged, wax-impregnated, highly-flammable toys for boys who should know better.

***Avoid table decorations.***

There is seldom enough room for food, lighting, personal feast gear, BYO bread and drink without any additional decorations. Doubled tables will finally give us enough room to bring a proper service of feast gear.

Use candles and table runners as the decoration and make it clean and elegant. People will fill up the table with their stuff.

By way of explanation: in order to avoid decorations that look sparse and cheap, they will have to be huge to be in proportion with the doubled tables. This would stifle across-table conversation, and take up valuable table space, so just avoid it.

Decorate the high table only. Or if you must do something else, consider having a “leftovers” or “serving table” at the side / end of the hall which you can decorate. Such a table would also be an ideal spot to display subtleties.

### **Table Runners**

We think you can really go to town on the decorations of the table runners. Imagine a gold border (embattled or maybe vine leaves or stars, or foliate like Sigurd's list barrier) along all edges of a red runner, maybe yellow fringe or tassels on the ends, a central design relating to baronial heraldry (towers, stars etc) etc.

You will need to decide if they are going to be reusable or disposable.

Cheap fabric from Kutwell is virtually disposable, and pretty much anything should do. You could use real (i.e. non-fabric) paint and stencils (mundane stencils often have very usable motifs, and geometric stencils, such as towers, are very easy to make) to make borders and decorate the runners, with towers and stars. Just make sure the fabric won't leak colour into the table cloths if there is a small spill.

If you intend the table runners to be reusable, you will need to choose colour fast fabric and paint that will stand up to the rigours of cleaning.

Either way, it seems like a good group project and should probably tend towards something that can be reused.

Also, if completed as a group project, you will probably eliminate the destructive actions of grinding food into them, and impregnating them with wax that have befallen such previous efforts. However, it is probably worth reminding people to treat the runners (and other items) with respect before the event.

Note: Kutwells has had red drill for \$2-3/m in recent times. While it needs a couple of hot washes to make it colour fast, it is hard wearing and looks good. It would be perfect for the job.

### **Salt Cellars**

We ain't poor in this kingdom, and if it fits with the theme, how cute would that be? Imagine a nice little tower on each table. Surely we can find or have the populace make a bunch of gold painted towers that fit in the palm of the hand. Then a little Chinese cup (e.g. Mong coffee cup) could be slotted into it. Could be used for salt or at other times sauces or something.

### **Serving Gear**

Buy or hire (it's not that expensive) a matched set of serving gear, suitable to the purpose. Include serving implements such as spoons etc. Use the theme (red, gold, and you can add white and blue too).

The following are some golden rules for serving food:

- Don't serve liquid food (stews, pasta, etc) on a plate, put it in a bowl.
- Use plates or trays for dry food (roast meat, etc).
- Serve with the correct implements
- Don't use plates or bowls that are under or oversized for the content
- Serve hot food from heated bowls, plates and trays

Make sure all the serving stuff suits the dish, is the right size and made of the right materials. It needs to look period. If it needs to be able to be heated, make sure it will survive the process.

If the serving dishes and implements are the same they add to the event. Odd dishes look tacky. Nicer, different serving stuff should be used for the high table, and having separate and slightly different dishes (e.g. a different colour) for vegetarians and those with specific dietary requirements aids in easy serving.

If you are buying anything at all for the feast, it is more useful if the barony can use it afterward.

## **Other Considerations**

### **Seating Plans**

We would strongly recommend asking attendees to organize themselves into table lots of X people when they book, or indicate with which group they would like to be seated. Thus, a seating plan can be determined ahead of time.

- A rough plan might consist of who is at each table, then allowing each party to pick their own table (to an extent)
- A more formal seating plan might also allocate tables

These preparations prevent on the night disasters such as when a family turns up slightly late and has to be split amongst three tables. It also avoids situations where there are 2 people sitting at most of the tables, and insufficient space for any of the larger groups of friends or households.

If you choose not to do this, you may still need to allocate some tables e.g.:

- royal helpers / companions (this should be near TRMs),
- kitchen and/or serving staff (near kitchen),
- kids (!?) etc or people who need specific tables.

### **Seating Arrangements**

We strongly endorse the use of two (or three) long tables running the length of the hall. It is so much more period than the staggered tables we usually have.

While it has a much more period feeling, it can be hard for access. If this table arrangement is chosen, there should be gaps between each group of two double tables for access reasons.

Having large separate tables is certainly appreciated by diners on a purely functional level, but there is no reason to have the totally un-period angled-table arrangement that has become so popular in recent times. Not only is it disorderly and somewhat disturbing to the 'medieval' mindset but it creates bottlenecks and narrow passages that are difficult for servers and ladies in long skirts to negotiate.

Always allow plenty of room between tables/ rows so that people can move between tables when the populace is seated, even if they are wearing Spanish farthingales. Keep the access to tables clear of main traffic routes and peoples' belongings.

### **Menus & Ingredients Lists**

It is essential that these are published and placed on each table. One per seat is ideal.

In the past publishing the menu newsletter before the event has been very successful.

The servers should also know this information. Not everyone can read standard typefaces by candle light.

### **Hand Washing**

This is a lovely way to signal the impending start of the feast proper. It helps fill the gap as people settle in and acts as a psychological cue to focus on the feast, and take seats etc. Consequently it is an important piece of ceremony for any high end feast.

With scented water in the jug, rose petals\* in the bowl and a towel to dry ones fingers, this ceremony can really set the scene.

In order to ensure it doesn't take too long, organise multiple servers to do this simultaneously, i.e. one lot of washers for high table, and at least one for each side of the room or row of tables.

It is generally a good idea to have multiple set of towels that are changed regularly during the process. The ceremony loses some of its lustre if you find yourself 'drying' your fingers on a sopping wet towel. (These towels are another ideal place for decorations that tie into the theme – nice red towels with embroidered stars and / or towers.)

The washers also need to be trained properly - to pour very little water over the fingers, not have people put their fingers in the water bowl!!

\* It doesn't necessarily need to be roses; it could be any period flower and scent. However, tie it into the theme if at all possible, and roses have so many relevant meanings.

### **Changing**

Allow lots of time for people to change clothes, and make sure that people know they will have from X:30 to Y:30 to change, before the day arrives.

Surprisingly large sections of the populace like to change clothes before court or before the feast or ball. With the outdoor walk, it makes sense that people will change into their spectacular finery either at the feast hall, or at the Great Hall in time for the coronation / ball.

### **Something to do**

Have something for those who get to site early.

For example, set up the baronial photo albums for viewing before the feast

Ensure there is somewhere for them to place their stuff during this time, and that they can sit down.

### **Music**

Have suitable music in the background during the feast, and frankly, all the events. This creates instant ambience. Consider hiring musicians or using CDs of period music. Such background music needs to be:

- fairly low volume (use the sound system if available to pipe it throughout the hall, otherwise accept that parts of the hall will not be able to hear it),
- not piercing (like descant recorders or shawms).

No matter what music or entertainment they have at the feast, there should be some very quiet background music going when nothing else is happening to add texture to the event. Consider a restaurant without background music.

### **Servers**

Organise your designated servers beforehand, this includes picking a head server.

Ensure there is one server per table allocated.

Co-ordinate one or two or three (male) Peers to serve the Crown. This is a nice touch. (Never ask ladies to do this, although it's fine if they volunteer.)

Make sure that the servers are briefed on the feast and the serving of it about a week before the event. Have another briefing at the hall when they get there. Post the menu, ingredients list and serving information (how much to serve, with what, from what, to whom) somewhere in the kitchen or servery so servers can refer back to it if they forget.

Having a head server is fundamentally important. Servers should be talking to them not to the kitchen staff. It also gives the head cook one point of call if they need to discuss anything.

These pre-organised servers should wear the Baronial Serving Tabards while serving each course. They must take off the tabards to sit at the table because wearing them while seated looks awful. The Peers serving high table should not wear tabards. (Ah! The privileges of rank.)

If there are insufficient, there is time to co-ordinate making new ones. (Don't bother making or wearing the hats).

A servers & kitchen staff table is worthy of consideration – although realize that some servers will want to sit with their friends. The head server should collect them personally each time rather than announce they are needed in front of the whole populace.

Please don't expect ladies to serve unless they volunteer. Long skirts and heavy stuff are a risky combination.

### **Other Helpers**

Organise your kitchen hands and dishwashers beforehand. Seriously.

Begging someone to help out when they are in their court finery is rude, as is announcing during a formal feast that dishwashers are needed. It destroys the ambience of the event and the mind-set of the attendees. It is also an imposition, and looks tacky and disorganised.

It is worth remembering that you get better quality assistance from those recruited and responsible for the job.

# CORONATION COURTS

These are a big deal.

These are all about the outgoing and incoming Kings and Queens.

Everything should be about them.

Everyone else should be prepared to fade into the background unless TRMs choose to temporarily share the spotlight – e.g. awards, thanks etc

## General Set Up & Preparation

### Checklist

Have a checklist of everything that is needed (refer to the appendices for an example).

Get someone else to give it the once over before starting

Have these people assigned beforehand. Also have them do a practice set up of all the stuff to see what is what and how it works before the event.

### Heralds

Heralds should have the customized coronation and awards ceremonies prepared ahead of time. They should also have practiced them.

Ensure they know how to pronounce TRMs and TRHs names and other terms like Regina and Rex etc.

Organise additional lighting for them. A standard candelabrum is ideal, and sits well next to a stand. There should also be a table, with a drink and throaties for each herald / back up herald.

Don't forget back up heralds.

The Heralds must wear their formal regalia. (A nice touch is for the heralds to avoid wearing clothes that clash with the tabards.)

## Throne Area

### Hangings

Again, create an environment that highlights the Crown

### Kingdom Banners

These must be displayed prominently behind or above the thrones.

Around the thrones, the focus should be on the Crown alone.

### Thrones

Sufficient thrones for all dignitaries participating in courts are required.

Consider that Callum and Chretienne had extra thrones, and Vitale has a huge gothic chair that is also suitable (he has also been talking about making a pair).

Thrones need cushions, so we would suggest a matched set for all the thrones present. This could be another baronial project.

### Foot Stools

These could be considered for Royals of a diminutive stature so they don't have to swing their legs like a 5 year old.

However, royals have taken a tumble on these so it is crucial that they are very, very stable and there is still someone to assist them on to them. If in doubt, don't use them and arrange the thrones accordingly.

### Rugs

Beg, borrow, hijack. Just get enough stable, matched rugs to do the area in front of and under the thrones.

Matched sets are vitally important. Not only does it create an elegant setting, but it looks expensive and opulent. (Also, make sure the rugs are clean!!)

When you lay them down, ensure the curly bits are under the thrones to avoid it looking messy, and any undignified trips or face-plants.

**Kneeling cushions**

You will need at least two.

Also designate someone to assist people to kneel and stand up again. Make sure they know how to do it too. A floppy arm is worse than useless.

On that topic, designate someone(s) to assist people walk up stairs etc.

**Baronial Banners**

Smaller SG banners to the sides of the throne area would be acceptable, but again leave the big ones for the end of the hall for the Crown to stare at.

**Lady in Waiting table**

Set up a large table behind the thrones for the LiWs to organise and lay out items required for court (more on this later).

This should be large and handy but discreet, and have a discrete table cloth to sit over everything before court.

Also, no one goes near it. Period.

**Other**

Look at period coronation ceremonies for ideas that don't conflict with Kingdom tradition, such as music.

**The Site**

Make sure the front door is not opened (and the curtain is pulled during the courts). The doors are very close to the stage and will interrupt proceedings if people enter here.

If TRMs wish it, use the back door and centre aisle for the Coronation procession to the stage. This adds to the pomp and circumstance and allows time for the court to get themselves straight after entering the hall and the populace to look and take photos etc. Note: this will require a door person here, at least during the times this entrance will be used.

Make sure the grand pianos on the stage are concealed / decorated in some way that makes them look not like pianos. Consider hanging a banner (Kingdom) on the wall above the musicians' gallery; this area is a large white space that otherwise distracts from the stage.

### **Music**

Consider using period Coronation music (e.g. there is Venetian coronation music available) to set the scene. It might be possible to get people to perform this.

(Of course, there is also nothing wrong with using canned music in order to allow as much of the populace to experience the event as possible.)

### **Banners of the populace**

Personal gonfalons should be displayed around the room on the sides, roof and back of the hall.

There may be a problem in decorating both Coronation hall and feast hall with limited numbers of banners. Think this through beforehand and work it out.

Keep in mind that the Coronation hall will need a lot less decorating than the feast hall. The items used in the Coronation hall need to be high quality stuff that is appropriate for the style and scale of the hall.

### **Ready Rooms**

If at all possible – have two (one for each set of royals). If not possible, have Ready Room staff work with Royal staff to change over the room

Ensure the rooms are supplied for the Royals with care packages and comfort supplies. (Refer appendices for details)

## **During Court**

### **Presentations**

It is the tradition in most Kingdoms to give gifts to the outgoing and incoming Royalty. It is also the tradition of many groups (including our own) to give gifts to visiting Royalty.

This practice is a wonderful opportunity to show our appreciation for not only hosting a huge Kingdom event, but also to say thank you to the King and Queen for all the sacrifices they have to make along the way. It adds more pomp and circumstance to the formal courts and is also a perfect opportunity to showcase the talents and skill of artisans within the Barony.

Such presentations as those from the Barony need to be co-ordinated well ahead of time. You may remember the visit of Ivan and Anastaasia. The presentation contained all manner of things appropriate to their personas – Viking cloaks, ears-poons and tweezers, embroidery, etc. While we may not have that kind of notice for the incoming Royalty, we could certainly do something similar for those stepping down.

Anyone stepping up is likely to be in need of largess and similar items. We could, as a Barony make a significant contribution to this as well as giving some more gifts of a more persona-neutral nature.

In Caid it is tradition at Crown Tourney for the Ladies of the Rose to present the Crown Princess with yellow roses. Lochac seems to have few traditions, and some reluctance to create them. A nice idea might be to have the new Queen (and perhaps the old Queen also) presented with roses by a bunch of children (each child presents one rose). Perhaps the roses could be of different colours if you choose to give to both Queens. Perhaps some of the roses could be the chocolate kind. Check with the Crown to see if this is an acceptable idea prior to the event.

# GRAND BALL

There are limited numbers of dancers in the barony. Although many non-dancers will be there for court, they will need some kind of incentive to remain afterwards.

## Non-Dancers

Prioritise having something for non-dancers to do, don't make it an afterthought. Don't rely on vague promise of entertainments and games to draw in more people and avoid over organising it as most people will want to drink and talk once they actually get there.

If non-dancer rooms are not possible, ensure the hall is friendly to non-dancers. Consider providing:

- rugged alcoves surrounded with comfortable seating
- incidental tables for keeping goblets off the floor
- tables with candle lighting and period game boards

Think back to the non-dance areas of the Carnivale and Merchants' Balls. Each one had seating, a table, and some form of entertainment available for use.

Ensure these areas are not between the dancers and the music maker, and that they are obviously not involved in the dancing.

## Other Seating

Of course the dancers will also need seating.

You could consider a variation on the Caroso layout for a large part of the hall. In other words, place seating around the walls of the dance floor. This will define the area set aside for dancing and signal to the non-dancers where they shouldn't stand around gossiping. A second row of chairs or benches (preferably medieval/oid) situated in front of some of the seating could be used for people to signal their interest in the next set as described by Caroso.

Dancers should be familiar with this arrangement. This information should be circulated with the event information ahead of time. Never announce mundane logistics at an event, this will break the mood – publish the information beforehand.

## **The Crown**

TRMs are unlikely to want to sit in state through the whole ball. Make sure that they have space for a comfortable place sit and drink and talk and receive the populace, i.e. you may need to rearrange the throne area.

This would be an ideal time for You as Baron and Baroness to present members of the Populace to them. This formal, very period practice has been largely ignored in recent times, which is a shame the populace loves to meet their King and Queen in game. This should also be checked with TRMs ahead of the event and on the night as They have other business arise or may be tired.

It might be nice to have Their 'reception' area furnished with period seating for any guests they invited to take their leave. We would suggest a couple of benches. Not only do they clearly differentiate Their Majesties thrones, but they are not sufficiently comfortable to promote 'sitters'.

Vitale, Roland and Isabel Maria all have benches that can seat two. There are a couple of single seaters out in the populace too.

## **Master of Ceremonies**

It is often helpful to have someone elegantly introduce each set. They need to allow the focus to be the dancing and not themselves. (The best emcees in these situations are the ones people don't remember.)

The person organized to do this should not be someone who is running around organizing things. Breathlessly gasping out the dance names defeats the purpose.

## **Music between sets**

This is a nice ambience creator. Again, the music should be secular, non-dance, low volume and not the sort of thing that pierces conversation.

## **Clean Up**

Ensure there are brooms and rags and quick drying products for cleaning up food drops and drink spills when they happen in order to avoid injury and damage to the site or clothes.

Someone should be allocated to do this, not the MC or Maitre d'. They should also do a visual sweep of the dance floor after the supper and remove any drops or spills before the dancing restarts.

### **Court / Entertainment Aftermath**

If court or entertainment is scheduled during the ball, it may help to have a mini set of high-participation dances available to get things going again afterwards. The set could be couple of well-known branles and an English Country dance or similar. Balls have a tendency to fall flat after interruptions like food or entertainments.

If people stop moving, they tend to stay stopped for the rest of the evening.

### **Drinks**

Having water easily available during the ball is essential. Wandering off to the Ladies in order to fill a goblet is disturbing.

Consider having jugs of water available during the dancing. These could be placed on some of the incidental tables situated near the dancing as well as in some of the alcoves.

A better choice would be to supply both water and cordials. Cordials should be indicated, especially those without sugar. The label might be as simple as a specific coloured ribbon around the handle.

If you have jugs that tend to dribble, it can be nice to have a tray or platter to sit them on.

You could also consider co-ordinating servers to do the rounds between sets. If those jugs have a tendency to dribble, the server can simply have a small towel or cloth (suitably decorated) to catch any drips as they form.

## **THE NEXT DAY**

Please don't start things too early!

Consider the parking situation in town and at the Sign of the Takahe on Sunday mornings, and publish parking suggestions for out of towners.

## **PEERAGE MEETINGS:**

Ensure that a supply of coffee and tea is available for peerage meetings.

Also ensure the Laurel Meeting is not opposite the Arts and Sciences display. (It is generally advisable to avoid putting it up against shopping opportunities for that matter.)

If there are non-peers on site during the meetings, they will need to be 'entertained' and have a reason for being there. Most probably won't bother.

## **A&S DISPLAY:**

The ideal time for this would be during a Friday Night revel.

We say this because in that environment the display isn't rushed and crammed in between other activities like a poor cousin. Having the display opposite the Peerage Meetings reduces participation (only the extremely dedicated and the Peers will turn up). Cramming it amongst other things makes it look like an afterthought of little importance, which in turn reduces the perceived value of the activity to the populace.

Scheduling it on Friday night during the revel would also allow performances.

An extremely important consideration is that an A&S display on Friday gives the Laurels a chance to see the work on offer, and digest it before discussions commence in the Sunday morning meeting.

Regardless of when the display happens:

- Don't forget to allow time for displays to be set up after the table set up
- Is it a "sit next to your display" or "display and run away" type of thing?
- Will there be a Laurel viewing time?
- Announcements should be made for
  - display set up,
  - general viewing,
  - last chance viewings,
  - display takedown

## QUEEN'S CHAMPION TOURNEY

Will we have the place to ourselves or be sharing it with bus loads of tourists?

How protective is the site of their grass? Are they going to allow the scuffs and divets that come with heavy fighting?

Also remember toilet facilities. Sign of the Takahe doesn't always allow people in to use their facilities, unless they are eating there.

Are pavilions permitted on site, if so, do they have a stake depth rule.

What space is available for tents? If there is not enough room, the site needs to be changed. For example, Victoria Park is just up the road from the sign of the Takahe and could be used for the tourney.

Keep in mind that rain may be the least of our worries, because even if the sun is shining and the wind low, (both of which are unlikely), it will be cold and probably very damp. (Those who commonly sit on the ground may find it problematic with the waterlogged nature of the earth at that time of year.)

### Tents

Even if it was warm, people won't stand around in the elements through a whole tourney. Tents are absolutely essential. The site needs to be set up with this in mind because they are **not** an optional extra. Even if only few members of the populace can be bothered bringing period pavilions, consider borrowing some shades for general use. (Also organise some people to help set them up and take them down afterwards.)

Too often local tourneys don't make the leap from "SCA tourney" to "Medieval Experience". By experiencing events overseas and viewing every set of photos we can get to online, we have concluded that the lack of setting is largely to blame. We don't have the viewing galleries depicted in period sources, but we can get the tents.

### Tent Furnishings

Of course sitting on the bare ground in a pavilion doesn't really improve things much.

Encourage the populace to make an effort in furnishing their own pavilions, and likewise encourage the populace to band together to furnish the communal pavilions and sunshades they are using. Rugs, tables and table cloths, seats, even just a comfy pile cushions will help create an environment a lord or lady of the middle ages or renaissance might recognise.

## FRIDAY NIGHT REVEL SUGGESTIONS

A revel is really quite essential to this kind of high end event. It breaks the ice and gives everyone involved in the main event an evening off to enjoy the SCA and the company of the visitors when they do not have to carry out duties etc.

*In other words:*

*Revels should not be run by anyone helping with the running of the rest of the event*

If handled properly, having a somewhat informal, but fully garbed revel the night before can make the formal part seem so much grander.

It also gives an opportunity to announce awards for those individuals who may be at a different site during the courts proper. (This needs to be mentioned to the Crown well ahead.)

Such a revel also allows the perfect opportunity for A&S displays. They don't get lost amongst the bustle of tourneys, meetings and feasting, and people actually have the time to read documentation, or search out the artisan to discuss their work.

It gives an opportunity for performances that won't match the tone or theme of the formal courts or feasts, or fit in the available floor space at other venues.

It also gives you an opportunity to present to the Crown, your stewards and cooks for the next few days. Too often the people who are working hard behind the scenes don't get a moment to actually meet their King and Queen in game, and that is generally quite disappointing. We say this from experience.

### **Food**

Finger food and nibbles should be served during the revel.

Food should be organised by the revel steward/cook, and not provided by pot luck. We strongly advise against pot luck, for three reasons:

1. They are a lot of work for the attendees for what usually turns out to be a poor or uneven spread. (No vegetarian option, numerous roast chickens, several blocks of cheese etc)
2. They are a lot of work and hassle for people who are working on the event, finishing garb, transporting visitors etc
3. A significant portion of the attendees won't bother to provide anything anyway

That said, you don't want your revel stewards to break their backs either. (Well, unless they volunteer off their own bat).

It is actually surprisingly easy to put on a supper that is largely purchased rather than made. (Even if such a supper is a bit "not quite medieval", are potlucks ever any better?)

For example:

- small rolls or bread slices,
- dips,
- cheese board,
- fruit board,
- antipasto type stuff with olives,
- cured meats, etc,
- fresh and dried fruit,
- nuts,
- almond cookies,
- almond macaroons,
- jam tartlets,
- fruit tarts,
- sugared nuts,
- small savouries,
- locum, halva
- candied fruit/peel/petals

Easy things to make ahead and add include:

- roasted chicken parts,
- maybe some small savoury or sweet tarts,
- cookies etc, that sort of thing.

And that is just off the top of Christian's head – without even wandering through a supermarket for ideas.

All the stewards need to do is remove the packaging to lay it out on serving plates.

The event will have a supply of cordials (for the ball / afternoon tea), some of which could be made available for the revel. You could even serve hot mulled wine and maybe even hot soup (light (but tasty)

vegetable soups for a supper 😊) – that would be a nice welcome on a cold evening.

Make sure the populace are aware that this is supper or finger food and that they are expected to have eaten first.

## **Venue Suggestion**

We would suggest St Mary's on Papanui Road.

You will remember this as the revel venue for the visit of King Edric and Queen Catalina.

While not in the centre of town, it is straight down Papanui Road, and thus accessible using a large number of buses from the Bus Exchange. It is also on the way in from the Airport.

### **Facilities:**

- large wood panelled hall (with rafters that are perfect for suspending banners)
- cosy, carpeted side room that is perfect for A&S displays.
- ready room at the back of the side room,
- large kitchen with oodles of bench space
- many plates (would need to confirm)
- excellent toilets, with enough room for changing garb etc too

## **SUNDAY POST-REVEL**

We would suggest a casual, laid back, optional mundane clothing event at someone's home.

Treat the post revel as a time to wind down, not do more work. People, particularly those involved in the event, will be tired (and the fighters will be dirty & sweaty) and rather keen to avoid formally organised activities.

Also, as it won't be part of the formal activities, people who need to travel will be able to miss it without feeling guilty about missing any official business.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Ladies in Waiting

Encourage those chosen to be ladies in waiting to research the job online as there are numerous articles that give a good overview or basic understanding of the common jobs that fall to ladies in the service of a Queen.

Some good pages to get you started include:

- [www.currentmiddleages.org/tents/retinue.html](http://www.currentmiddleages.org/tents/retinue.html)
- [www.tirbriste.org/dmir/SCALife/1712.html](http://www.tirbriste.org/dmir/SCALife/1712.html)
- [www.cs.ndsu.nodak.edu/~malarkey/sca/brandi/handbook\\_princess.doc](http://www.cs.ndsu.nodak.edu/~malarkey/sca/brandi/handbook_princess.doc) (see the packing list in the appendices)

Also, they should wear comfortable shoes. They will spend most of their time on their feet, so it is important they can survive at least 2 whole days of it.

### **Court Duties:**

#### **Awards**

Normally, a LiW will be present during the Court preparation and will therefore know which awards are coming up in what order. This will allow her to organise the award tokens on the LiW table behind the thrones.

Also, no LiW should ever look surprised, shocked or horrified in court.

#### **Set Up**

The head LiW should liaise with whoever is setting up the thrones for court and feast to ensure everything is done.

Specifically, their duties normally include ensuring:

- The thrones are properly set up
  - o The thrones have the right cushions
  - o The throne table is in place

- TRMs goblets are half full and placed on the throne table
- A stable vase of flowers is place at the rear of the throne table
- The kneeling cushions are placed – or have them ready to place immediately once Their Majesties have taken their seats
- There is sufficient space for people to kneel at least 2-deep in front of the thrones
- The LiW table is organised and has
  - The awards etc laid out
  - A jug of water to refill TRMs goblets
  - A notepad and pen(cil)
  - A fan (in case Her Majesty requires it)
  - Several tissues (in case Her Majesty requires it)
  - There are some candles, candle lanterns and matches under the LiW table (generally more important at candle lit or sunset events.)

### **During Court**

- Ensure TRM's glasses do not remain empty, and be careful to *half* fill them with their preference. (Full glasses can slop their contents.)
- Pass such award tokens and largess as is required when They signal. (The signal might be putting their hand behind the back, looking around, putting their hand out etc. Stay alert if this is your job.)
- Be ready to receive any gifts given to TRMs. Also be prepared for them to be heavy.
- Discover TRMs preference regarding receiving and off-loading goods. Do they like to receive through the middle and off-load around the outside etc. and work to Their preference.
- Stay alert for hiccups that are affecting the smooth running of court. Is the herald dry? (Give him a glass of water) Is it getting dark? (Organise some candles or candle lanterns) etc.
- One LiW should note who gave what to the Crown as it happens. They may need to supply a pen(cil) and small notebook for this purpose.

## **Feast Duties**

### **Set Up**

Again, the LiW should liaise with the event steward to ensure the Throne area is suitably set up.

### **During the Feast**

This depends on what Her Majesty wants. As with all of the LiW and Guard duties, it should be discussed with the Chamberlain well ahead.

It is not unusual for a table to be set up behind the canopy for the LiW and/or Guards use. This table should be used to store The Basket, jugs of water and or ale/wine for TRMs, any other special goods or requirements that they may require.

One LiW really should be on duty at all times during the feast, and it is her duty to fetch things from this table for the convenience of TRMs. This includes refilling the goblets of TRMs, fetching largess they may request and accompanying Her Majesty on rounds or on trips to the “throne room” etc.

As you can imagine, this may be that the LiW doesn't really get to sit down and eat. Consequently you may consider rotating them during the evening otherwise the LiW will probably end up just sneaking bites behind the canopy unless TRMs dismiss her.

## **Other Duties**

### **Do not leave Her Majesty alone.**

There must be either a Guard or a Lady in Waiting with her at all times she is not with the King.

A LiW (or Guard) should walk in back of the Crown.

They should also be prepared to back off out of hearing range if Her Majesty partakes in a privileged conversation.

### **Fetch, Tote and Carry**

Her Majesty does not fetch, tote or carry, but the LiWs and Guards do. Her Majesty might be permitted to carry a goblet (if using it), or fan, but anything more strenuous than that falls to the LiWs and Guards. This includes parasols, largess, cloak etc.

The Guards should carry anything large, heavy or awkward. A LiW is a lady after all. (Heavy things like thrones, sturdy boxes, heraldic cloaks etc are all Guards duties. Just ask Vitale about court at Estrella.)

If you are asked to hold the crown, hold it reverently in both hands, parallel to the ground. There are no other options. DO NOT sling it over your arm *or* try it on *or* leave it lying about.

### **Lead by example**

If not actively working, the LiW must stand when either His or Her Majesty enter a room, or enter a conversation or pass by. On occasions when they are already standing they must curtsy. While others will also do this by reflex, the LiWs cannot be seen to lack sufficient respect for the Crown when 'off duty'.

### **Interference**

Discuss this with Her Majesty or the Chamberlain beforehand as it may not be required.

If Her Majesty finds herself "locked in mortal conversation" and gives you the signal, interrupt the discussion to remind her of the appointment in 2 minutes or that the King has requested her presence.

### **The Basket**

This will get heavy. It needs to be easily accessible at all times. Swap carrying duties if it needs to be lugged about for any length of time.

#### **Items to include**

- event time table
- time piece
- event maps
- appointment list
- notebook and pen
- painkillers
- throaties
- breath mints / spray
- lip gloss / lip balm / lip stick
- powder compact / mirror

- small bottle of water and/or juice
- Her Majesty's goblet
- chocolate or similar nibbles
- baby wipes (for sticky fingers)
- small tokens / largess
- tissues / handkerchief
- sewing kit (incl. safety pins)
- gloves
- gollar / neckerchief etc
- fan
- cell phone & numbers

## Appendix 2: Court Checklist

Allocate who is supplying what and who is transporting what well ahead of the day.

### Visible to the Populace

Thrones	(stable) Vase of roses
Throne cushions	Rugs
Throne Table	Kneeling cushions
Table cloth	Herald stand
Banners	Herald table
Hangings	Herald goblets (half full)
Royal goblets (half full)	

### Things Behind the Scenes

Herald light  
LiW table  
Table cloth  
Jug of water for royal goblets  
The Basket

### **Just in Case Supplies**

Candles, candle lanterns and matches

Torch

Additional pen and paper / note cards

One or two thing cushions

2-3 extra cups (in case herald etc forget)

## Appendix 3: Ready Room Requirements

### Room Requirements

If at all possible this needs to be a room with a door. Check its sound-proofness, and inform TRMs and TRHs if conversations can be overheard outside.

If that is not possible, the area needs to be private and fully screened with a defended exclusion zone around it.

Ensure that it is well sign-posted as being out of bounds. Only the Crown and those invited in by them should enter it.

### Care Packages

Being the Crown is a stressful and busy job. Being away from home, your support networks and normal food can make it even harder. With that in mind, a care package presented nicely in a basket or large bowl does wonders.

Speak to the Chamberlain about their preferences and include:

- favourite caffeinated / carbonated / energy / flavoured beverages
- favourite candy / muesli bars
- favourite biscuits or similar

Also include a selection of (good quality):

- small cartons of juice (kids sized Just Juice in a couple of flavours)
- small bottles of water
- fresh fruit
- preserved fruits (olives, dried apricots, apples etc)
- nuts (salted and plain)
- sweets (Turkish delight, candied oranges etc)
- tea and coffee making supplies including an electric jug

The following should also be available:

- jug of water and basin (or damp, scented face cloths, or baby wipes)
- towels
- hand lotion (rose scented)
- sticking plasters
- panadol and disprin
- throaties
- small mirror

## **Comfort Supplies**

While there is nothing better than a floral arrangement to make a room special, it is simply one of many things that can be done to make the room comfortable.

The following have been appreciated in the past:

- fan heater
- comfortable seating
- incidental tables
- electric jug (full)
- table and chair (suitable for writing)
- wardrobe (portable bar type)
- full length dress mirror

The tables should be covered with tablecloths and there could be rugs on the floor. You are trying to create a safe haven from the madness of the event and being on display.