

Worshipful Company of Lightmongers



A Personal Account of the Two Ceremonies: Freedom of the City & Liveryman of the Company

First Meeting with the Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court's Office

This was to check paperwork and arrange payments etc. I only had to wait a few minutes and the actual process only lasted about 15 minutes. I needed to take some stuff with me but I took the wrong Freedom Certificate and she was quite relaxed about me scanning it in later and emailing her, so there isn't a crisis if you have the wrong things. I wore a suit, which felt right, but I don't think it would have upset anyone if I were a little bit more casual as it wasn't a formal meeting, just a data entry procedure. Oh, and the entrance to Guildhall is around the back, not from the courtyard, so always leave an extra 10 minutes to find your way in!

Second Meeting with the Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court

The next meeting was the ceremony itself at Guildhall in the same place. Family, friends, children etc. are all invited to watch (I had my 3 year old with me and a new born baby!). I arrived with plenty of spare time. I would suggest telling your friends and family a time about 15 minutes before you need to go in so they don't give you a reason to stress if they turn up at the last minute. I would also probably choose to meet them outside and come in together at the correct time instead of waiting in their lobby as I felt like we were imposing on those that worked there, although I'm sure they get it all the time.

At the appointed time someone comes to get you and takes you into a room to wait in which there is some interesting stuff to look at, but the most important thing is the words you need to read that are up on the wall. It would be better to have practiced them before now but if not read them out loud several times and try to figure out how to say that tricky paragraph with the colon in the wrong place! It helps a lot when you are in the room.

You wait here for about 15 minutes and then you are collected again and shown into a room opposite. You are guided through the whole process and although it is formal, it is also enjoyable and there is no reason to worry about getting it wrong as long as you maintain your dignity whilst doing it! Everyone will be very relaxed about it afterwards. When you are called up you are required to read the oath and sign your name and that whole process lasts about 5 minutes, at which point you shake hands and can relax. Murray Craig (The Clerk) will then fire a series of interesting anecdotes at you about some celebrities he has given the freedom to, and you make time to take some photos so make sure you bring a good camera (pretty much the only thing you need). After another 15 minutes you are let go with a goody bag and I'd suggest going to find a nice restaurant or bar to celebrate!

The whole thing lasts between 60-90 minutes but the formality and slight nerves of reading the oath gives you a great high afterwards.

Dress code for this is definitely formal, a suit with the Lightmongers tie would be very appropriate, and suits and business-wear for your guests would be suitable too.

Clothed in the Company Livery

The final stage, becoming a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Lightmongers, is even less painless. You turn up in your DJ, with a black bow tie (no colours), ready for the evening dinner and stand outside the door with your other Liverymen-to-be. One at a time the Clerk of the Court collects you and hands you the words you need to read on a piece of paper (3 lines). He holds your arm the whole time, but you go up to the bar, enter the court, listen to the declaration, give yours, sign your name, walk back to the bar, bow to the Master and leave. The whole time the Clerk is whispering in your ear and guiding you in and out so there is no chance of getting it wrong.

The whole thing lasts 5 minutes and then you get to enjoy a nice dinner as a new Liveryman, along with the Court. You may be asked to stand up towards the end and introduce yourself to the others at dinner so you feel welcome.

I didn't need to bring anything to this event, but I did spend a long time waiting around as I arrived as early as I thought I could – but there is nowhere to go or sit so I'd suggest finding out what time you need to be there and find a coffee shop if you arrive early.

By Liveryman James Simpson

Nearby Coffee Shops and Restaurants

Coffee Shops

Costa – Gresham Street
Pret A Manger – Gresham Street
Eat – Basinghall Street

Restaurants

Hawksmoor Guildhall
Goodman City Browns
The Anthologist
Davy's Wine Bar
The Ned
Coq d'Argent